

CINEFANTASTIQUE

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20,000 Leagues Under The Sea

*A Definitive Retrospect
of Walt Disney's
1954 Classic*

STAR TREK III

Director Leonard Nimoy
searches for Spock

FIRESTARTER

The latest Stephen King chiller
burns its way to the screen

SPLASH

Ron Howard unleashes a
mermaid on New York City

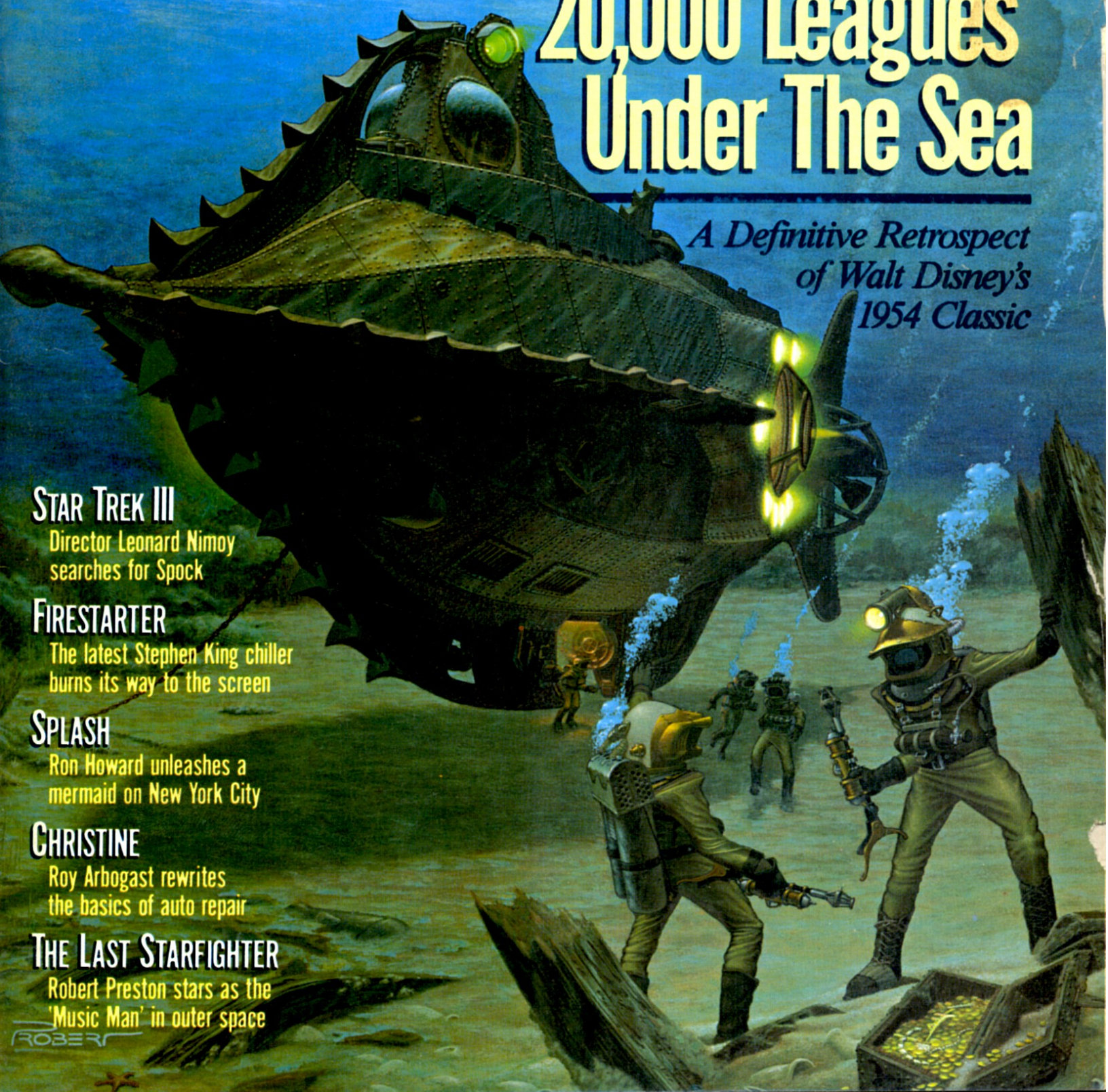
CHRISTINE

Roy Arbogast rewrites
the basics of auto repair

THE LAST STARFIGHTER

Robert Preston stars as the
'Music Man' in outer space

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The magazine with

MARCH, 1981

This magazine strives to keep you well-informed on current events in the world of *cinefantastique*—horror, fantasy and science fiction films. But we also try to place the genre in historical perspective by covering the great films of the past in features we call "Retrospects."

This issue showcases the making of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, released by Walt Disney Productions in 1954. The film is an acknowledged classic of science fiction, based on the visionary work of Jules Verne, one of the genre's founding fathers.

The film is noteworthy for a number of reasons beyond the obvious cinematic qualities that make it an exciting adventure. At the time of its release, the movie was the most expensive film production ever made, costing \$9 million. It was the first feature to be distributed by Buena Vista, the releasing arm of Walt Disney Productions. And it was the first live-action feature to have storyboards drawn for every scene in the script—a technique Disney developed in the production of cartoons, which is now a standard filmmaking practice, especially for effects-laden productions in the genre.

The film was also among the first to pioneer the use of the CinemaScope wide-screen process, and resulted in a number of significant technical innovations, including the introduction of fiberglass for model-making.

Los Angeles-based writers Joel Frazier and Harry Hathorne painstakingly researched the production of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, and interviewed many of the film's key creators, including director Richard Fleischer and actor James Mason, who played Captain Nemo. Also interviewed is Harper Goff, who developed the project for Disney and was its prime mover and grand designer. It was Goff who devised the look of the film and created the *Nautilus*, the most famous submarine of all.

Our cover, illustrating the functional beauty and elegance of Goff's *Nautilus* design, was painted by Hollywood art director Andy Probert as a tribute to the enduring work of art the film represents.

Frederick S. Clarke

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20,000 Leagues UNDER THE SEA

Walt Disney was willing to take a big financial gamble on a project he felt was worthy. Jules Verne's novel—nearly a century old—was still a riveting work of speculative fiction. And the Disney studio was home to the finest craftsmen in the business. The result of this fortuitous mixture: one of the greatest genre films of all time.

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BOND VS. BOND

*The battle rages in court and
on the screen for the boxoffice
spoils of Ian Fleming's 007.*

ARTICLE BY B. HUGH JAMES



Until the release of NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN last October, the cinematic fate of Ian Fleming's James Bond had been controlled by one man: Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli, who, partnered until 1975 with Harry Saltzman, has produced 13 Bond films, including last summer's OCTOPUSSY. The man who broke the Broccoli monopoly on Bond is Jack Schwartzman, a former executive of Lorimar, who has embarked on the role of independent Bond producer.

Now that NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN has racked-up impressive grosses worldwide, in excess of \$50 million, Schwartzman and his partner, executive producer Kevin McClory, are sure to put their rival Bond back in action again.

Naturally, the competition troubles Broccoli, the "Godfather" of Bond, whose legal muscle has prevented McClory from moving-in on his territory until Schwartzman got involved. And with earnings nearing a billion dollars on his Bond empire, Broccoli can afford the best lawyers that money can buy. But, thanks to a 20-year-old loophole in Broccoli's control of the Bond film rights, it looks like we'll be viewing two James Bonds from now on.

"As an entertainment lawyer for some 25 years, I have a certain respect for the written word," said Schwartzman. "It is quite plain—to me, at least—that Kevin McClory has the specific rights that he

claims to have, *in writing*. There is no doubt about it."

Schwartzman refers to McClory's successful litigation in 1963 against the late Ian Fleming, which awarded McClory the exclusive film rights to *Thunderball*, and perhaps ten other short Bond treatments as well. The particulars of the case are a tangled legal web that even a super-sleuth like James Bond might have trouble unraveling.

It all started way back in the fall of 1958, when Kevin McClory persuaded Ian Fleming to cooperate in bringing 007 to the screen in what would have been the spy's premiere film outing. McClory's prospects seemed bright, since he had previously worked for John Huston on *THE AFRICAN QUEEN*, Mike Todd on *AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS* and had just made his own producer directorial debut with *THE BOY AND THE BRIDGE*.

The movie, *JAMES BOND, SECRET AGENT*, was to be made under the auspices of McClory's and Fleming's mutual friend, Ivar Bryce, an entrepreneur who had formerly served in America for British intelligence under Sir William Stephenson, and whom some say was the model for Felix Leiter, Bond's CIA counterpart and best friend.

By late 1958, Fleming had already written Bond's first six adventures (including *Moonmaker* and *Dr. No*), but McClory found them unsuitable as potential

movies. McClory convinced Fleming to pen a 007 story specifically for the screen, based on ideas from the two of them, and eventually fleshed out by screenwriter Jack Whittingham.

During their idea sessions, which took place in Fleming's native England, the team originated—according to McClory—ten separate "short" treatments, before finally settling on a premise for a full script. By the latter half of 1959, though, *JAMES BOND, SECRET AGENT*, had encountered numerous snags. Soon after, in January 1960, Fleming embarked on his annual "write-a-Bond-novel sojourn" to Jamaica.

Fleming, utilizing the "novelization" rights that he apparently

thought were precisely granted to him (all business between McClory, Fleming and Bryce was essentially conducted only on a handshake), began adapting *JAMES BOND, SECRET AGENT*. Although Fleming added several sequences, his new book, *Thunderball*, was clearly based on the screenplay that McClory and Whittingham had contributed to.

McClory and Whittingham filed for an injunction against the novel in 1961, when *Thunderball's* publication became imminent. The case was resolved in 1963, when the High Court of London awarded McClory with what the producer has termed *all film and television rights to Thunderball*, and the other premises that he worked on with Fleming.

Norman Tyre, counsel for Cubby Broccoli, insists that this is *solely* McClory's view of the ruling. A presumably unbiased 1966 account—*The Life of Ian Fleming*, a book by John Pearson—however, contains a description of the court's decree which is virtually identical to McClory's.

Meanwhile, Cubby Broccoli and Harry Saltzman had launched their 007 series with *DR. NO* in 1962 and *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE* in 1963, under the corporate banner, Eon Productions Limited. In 1961, Eon bought the film rights to the 007 novels—except for *Casino Royale*, which was owned by producer Charles Feldman, and naturally, *Thunderball*—and options on any future Fleming Bond novels.

While the duo was completing their third 007 opus, 1964's *GOLD-FINGER*, McClory made arrangements to join forces with them to co-produce *THUNDERBALL*. McClory believed such a troika was his only chance to enlist Sean Connery, an ingredient felt—then, anyway—mandatory to a Bond movie's success.

Intriguingly, Broccoli and Saltzman had planned to make *THUNDERBALL*, their lead-off 007 entry, until discovering McClory's litigation. McClory asserts that this is

Sean Connery meets the creator of James Bond, the late Ian Fleming, circa 1963.



why the extravagant crime organization, S.P.E.C.T.R.E.—invented by Fleming for JAMES BOND, SECRET AGENT found its way into Eon Productions' DR. NO and FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE, even though the cartel wasn't in either novel. McClory's stake to S.P.E.C.T.R.E. helps explain why the villains, and their chief, Ernst Stavro Blofeld, haven't been shown in a Broccoli/Bond film for more than 12 years. In fact, 1977's THE SPY WHO LOVED ME intended to use S.P.E.C.T.R.E., until McClory threatened legal action.

In his THUNDERBALL production agreement with Broccoli and Saltzman, McClory conceded not to make another 007 picture until 1975—ten years from THUNDERBALL's 1965 theatrical debut. It has been speculated that Broccoli and Saltzman thought that James Bond's immense popularity would not last through the '70s. The contract also stipulated, according to McClory, that all of his film and television rights would then return to him.

Hence, in 1976, Kevin McClory began preparing JAMES BOND OF THE SECRET SERVICE, a new version of THUNDERBALL. The producer hired famed British mystery scribe Len Deighton (the Harry Palmer series, Berlin Game) and Sean Connery to collaborate with him on the picture's script, eventually titled WARHEAD, to avoid confusion with Eon Productions' version of Fleming's ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE, released in 1969. After some deliberation, Connery also decided to accept the film's starring role, even though he had initially rejected it.

Come 1978, WARHEAD was undeniably gaining momentum. It was then, though, that Danjaq (Broccoli's holding company, for which Eon Productions is "officially" a subsidiary) in conjunction with United Artists (Broccoli's 007 distributor), filed suit against McClory in England. The Ian Fleming Estate (Fleming died in 1964), in a separate action, also began suing McClory.

Broccoli, understandably, didn't want to see 007, a hero and mini-industry that he's spent a good share of his career developing, damaged by possibly being taken into an inappropriate realm. Some observers familiar with the case, however, judged that Broccoli was selfishly trying to thwart what he allegedly perceived as unfair—and maybe superior—competition.

Once the legal petitions commenced, McClory lost whatever WARHEAD financing he had. While an injunction was never brought against him, though one was unsuccessfully attempted, most industry insiders believed that his backers were scared off by the dispute. Nevertheless, for the next couple of years, McClory con-



Producer Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli on the set of last summer's OCTOPUSSY.

tinued to promote WARHEAD. At one point, he even had a bid from Lorimar to sponsor the film, but— for undisclosed grounds—he found the offer unacceptable.

By 1980, McClory probably began to give up hope. However, late in the year, an investment banker acting as McClory's representative contacted Jack Schwartzman, who had just recently established himself as an independent producer. A few months earlier, Schwartzman had left his post as executive vice-president of Lorimar where his duties included being the executive producer of BEING THERE and, ironically, conducting the firm's investigation of McClory's "alleged" WARHEAD ownership. Shortly after learning about McClory's situation, Schwartzman began negotiating for the Bond property, undaunted by the endeavor's legal entanglements.

Avoiding further litigation, however, must have been on Schwartzman's mind when he asked "Broccoli's people" if they'd like to "present" his Bond picture—an invitation that was, needless to say, declined.

Yet, the only "grey area" that seems to have truly disturbed Schwartzman was the availability of original 007 Sean Connery, who hadn't portrayed the agent since 1971's DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER. Without Connery, Schwartzman would not have made the movie. Schwartzman discovered that Connery was willing to revive the role as long as "I'm making

movies and not meeting with lawyers," he said the actor quipped. Schwartzman bought the rights to make "a film" based on "all of McClory's material: THUNDERBALL's screenplay, the Thunderball novel and anything that Fleming based Thunderball on."

Schwartzman points out that McClory's only involvement with the film was as "a kind of liaison for its Bahamas location shooting," with his executive producer's credit a condition of their "deal." Schwartzman soon shelved WARHEAD—"I wasn't interested in its approach," he said—and commissioned Lorenzo Semple, Jr. (FLASH GORDON, THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR) to draft a new adaptation, NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN.

Schwartzman had determined that producing the film independently without studio financing would net him the most creative control and best financial return. Schwartzman had already been turned down by the "ten to 11 companies" that he had originally approached to back his optioning and purchase of the film's underlying rights. The outfits all supplied various reasons for their decisions, but Schwartzman believes "the ongoing legal actions were a deterrent to committing themselves to the picture."

Schwartzman allied himself with Producers Sales Organization, headed by Mark Damon. Schwartzman had known Damon since 1947, when they both worked in a Los Angeles grocery, and

Schwartzman had lent support when Damon first started PSO. The fundraising process that Schwartzman and Damon used illustrates one of the industry's best alternative methods of movie-financing, and one at which PSO excels: getting "agreements" from foreign distributors to guarantee remuneration to a producer upon a picture's completion, which act as collateral on which certain banks are willing to lend.

Schwartzman stated another advantage to lining up what ultimately totaled 26 distributors: "If I had gone with one distributor worldwide—the sort of standard Hollywood situation—they eventually might have been influenced by the litigation and end the entire project. By going the independent route, a number of people would have had to chicken out before NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN could be terminated."

Despite such ingenuity, an attempt to prevent the film from being distributed was leveled against Schwartzman and McClory last spring by the Fleming Estate. The court ruled that, in Schwartzman's words, "The Estate's claim was ridiculous," a decision that can't foreseeably bear well for the Danjaq camp, whose own lawsuit is still—technically—alive.

For the future, Cubby Broccoli is prepping his 14th Bond enterprise, FROM A VIEW TO A KILL, based on a Fleming short story, to be directed by John Glen (OCTOPUSSY, FOR YOUR EYES ONLY) for a probable 1985 release.

Schwartzman has an option to make another 007 picture based on McClory's rights. Due to restrictions in his license to Schwartzman, McClory can't produce a Bond himself until 1986, or until a few years after Schwartzman exercises his option.

Schwartzman's next Bond—he has yet to exercise that option—need not necessarily be another remake of THUNDERBALL. The ten film treatments McClory developed with Fleming pit Bond against S.P.E.C.T.R.E. and the Mafia, assisted by cohorts M, Money Penny, Q and Felix Leiter.

"Interestingly, the word 'remake' doesn't appear anywhere in the involved documents," said Schwartzman. "This remake business is really only the interpretation of Danjaq UA and the Fleming Estate. Since this is one of the issues before the court, let the court decide."

And it is likely the courts will be involved should Schwartzman or McClory decide to mount another Bond moneymaker. The lawyers for Danjaq UA are vigilant watchdogs, and Broccoli was recently quoted as saying, "The opera isn't over until the fat lady sings."

Quipped Schwartzman, "We're just wondering if the fat lady hasn't already finished her aria." □

LEONARD NIMOY

In STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK you may have to look behind the camera to find him.

by Dan Scapperotti

Spock gets promoted in STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK—to director. Leonard Nimoy, who created the role in the popular television series of the late '60s, was signed to direct with no feature film experience and scant television work to his credit.

The move to direct was a cherished one for Nimoy, and won, it is widely assumed, as a *quid pro quo* to induce him to appear once again in the role of Spock. Nimoy assumed the role in STAR TREK II only after much foot-dragging and negotiation. And, at the end of that film Spock died, sacrificing himself to save the lives of his fellow crewmembers.

Paramount Pictures is leaving the question of Nimoy's further appearance as Spock an open one to promote the release of STAR TREK III, which opens nationally June 1. Nimoy is going along with the campaign, and refuses to discuss the issue.

"We're not discussing the question of whether or not Spock returns in the film," Nimoy said, bluntly. "Or even if we find him, what form he may take. The title suggests something. It suggests that there is some question about Spock's condition."

Nimoy is anxious, however, to talk about his role as director, a task of which he is proud. He completed the principal photography of STAR TREK III on October 15, after 49 days of shooting. Though filming was interrupted by a well-publicized fire on the lot, Nimoy finished right on schedule and slightly under budget.

"The most important thing I can tell you about STAR TREK III is that it is a very powerful story about friendship and commitment to friendship and what friends will do for each other," said Nimoy. "This film goes to the very heart of the relationship of these people. Kirk, Scotty, Sulu, McCoy, Chekov, Uhura—all of them—will be asked

**"We're not discussing whether or not Spock returns in this film, or, if we find him, what form he may take. The title suggests something."
—Leonard Nimoy, director—**

Leonard Nimoy directs a scene involving Valkris, a Klingon spy.



to make major sacrifices in the hope that they can help the man who was their friend."

Nimoy has been a member of the Directors Guild of America for 12 years so his move to direct isn't a totally new career path. "I'm about 17 years behind schedule," he explained. "I started building a director's career in the early '60s, and I never got around to developing it. The STAR TREK pilot sold, and I got very busy and pulled away from directing. It has been just in the last two or three years that I decided to start working at it again."

Nimoy's first directorial assignment was at Universal in 1972, for the vampiric "Death on a Barge" episode of Rod Serling's NIGHT GALLERY in which he also starred. Recently at Paramount, he directed a POWERS OF MATTHEW STAR show for STAR TREK III's producer Harve Bennett, and last year put William Shatner through his paces in an episode of T.J. HOOKER.

STAR TREK III, which went before the cameras on August 15 last year and roamed over six sound stages on the Paramount lot, is definitely Nimoy's biggest directorial challenge to date. Written by producer Harve Bennett, the third installment's story starts off with a badly damaged Starship Enterprise, limping home for some much-needed repairs after its defeat of Khan.

Lt. Saavik, Spock's Vulcan-Romulan protege, and Kirk's son, Dr. David Marcus, land on the Genesis Planet to start research. The new world, however, has evolved in strange and mysterious ways. The planet has also attracted the attention of Battle Commander Krige, a vicious Klingon warlord who intends to use the secrets of the planet to increase the powers of the Klingon Empire.

Meanwhile, Admiral Kirk receives evidence that Spock may be alive and sets out with the crew of the Enterprise on "a mission in



Admiral Kirk (William Shatner) reviews data tapes of he and Captain Spock in a poignant scene in which he attempts to come to terms with the death of his friend.



In STAR TREK III—THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK, Spock takes over behind the camera. Leonard Nimoy directs Shatner and Robert Hooks as Starfleet Admiral Moro.



Cathie Shirrif as Valkris, a Klingon spy who learns the secret of Project Genesis.

which they will confront the final frontiers of evolutionary science and the arcane mysteries of Vulcan mysticism."

William Shatner, Walter Koenig, Nichelle Nichols and George Takei reprise their familiar roles on the bridge of the Enterprise, while DeForest Kelley mans the sick bay and James Doohan keeps the engines running. Merritt Butrick returns as Kirk's son, the role he originated in the last film. Sadly, Kirstie Alley, who made such a splash in her screen debut as Lt. Saavik in the previous outing, was replaced by Robin Curtis. During negotiations, Alley's salary demands for the part put her out of the running.

Christopher Lloyd appears as the villainous Kruge. Mark Lenard plays Sarek, Spock's father, a role he created in the television series. And Dame Judith Anderson is a Vulcan priestess.

"This is a very ambitious movie," said Nimoy. "Production wise, it's more ambitious than the last film. There were two things that I wanted to accomplish in directing it. One was to do a responsible job by getting the work done on schedule and on budget. We did that."

Nimoy's other concern was a bit more personal. Since he's spent a great part of his life with the STAR TREK cast, Nimoy wanted to be the first director to dig deep into the film's characterizations and relationships.

"I felt I was in the best position to present that aspect in a better, richer way," he said. "I gave that to myself as a very specific challenge."

Nimoy had other challenges as well. The actor/director knew from the start that STAR TREK III was a major theatrical feature that

could have easily gotten out of control.

"The size of the project is enormous," Nimoy said. "We have wind storms and snow storms and explosions and fights and crowds and large numbers of alien people in alien makeup—which are all very time-consuming. There was a great deal of pressure."

STAR TREK III will be different in approach from the first two installments, directed respectively by Robert Wise and Nicholas Meyer. According to Nimoy, Wise's STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE was the most cerebral—the least "Treky" of the three films made so far.

"I think STAR TREK—TMP made the least use of the characters," he said. "It was a scientific concept that was being explored, and the characters just went along for the ride."

On the other hand, Nimoy said that Meyer's STAR TREK II—THE WRATH OF KHAN was much more fun—a dazzling adventure, complete with strong characters.

"I hope that STAR TREK III is an even more intense, more aggressive move in that direction," he said. "We deal with scientific ideas—but more in the area of how they affect this very special group of people."

Although Nimoy focused on working with the characters, he also was intimately involved in the film's special effects process. The production required a vast array of high-tech, razzle-dazzle effects, and George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic (ILM), which handled the work for STAR TREK II, was contracted to deliver the visuals. ILM assigned Ken Ralston to supervise the project, visiting the live-action sound stages to insure the proper photography of important background plates.

In addition, nearly every scene of STAR TREK III needed storyboards. ILM supplied a couple of sketch artists for the production and another one on the Paramount lot was available in case Nimoy needed some drawings rendered quickly.

"My involvement with ILM has been constant, not just in integration but in developing every special effect shot," explained Nimoy. "In a number of cases, they would come down to one of the Paramount stages with a camera crew. With their help, I would set up a shot, making sure the shot would work for them. Then they would get the live-action footage that I directed and take it back to San Rafael [ILM's headquarters] and add to or enhance it."

"On the other hand, they would also do shots that are totally of their own creation, but with the understanding that both of us have a clear idea of what that shot would be," continued Nimoy. "Every shot was

A grotesque forest on the Genesis Planet, where growth has gone wild, a set built on the soundstages at Paramount.





Leonard Nimoy directs a phaser blast from Klingon Commander Kruge (Christopher Lloyd). Nimoy is by now an old hand at the show's special effects techniques.



Kirk's son (Merritt Butrick) and Lt. Saavik (Robin Curtis) discover Spock's casket on the Genesis Planet, where it was shown to have landed at the end of the previous film.



Kruger (Christopher Lloyd) at the helm of the Merchantman, the Klingon battlecruiser, with aids John Laroquette and Stephen Liska.

discussed endlessly. In some cases I was directing shots on their sound stages, using their facilities because they have certain technical devices, like blue-screen, that we didn't have available at the Paramount studios."

Although new to feature filmmaking, Nimoy had few problems working with the state-of-the-art special effects for STAR TREK III. "I've been around it a lot," said Nimoy. "I've worked with it as an actor, and I know the procedures. I don't consider myself a special

effects technician by any means, but I understand what they can do, what they can't do, and what I have to provide the effects people to be able to make it work.

"There were times when I would have to ask why I can't do this or that, and they'd explain why," he continued. "But I've been in the film business since 1950, and I've worked in a lot of productions that used special effects of various kinds, so it's not as though I haven't worked with it before."

In the early part of his career—

many years before STAR TREK came calling—Nimoy was an actor at Republic Studios, making such low-budget quickies as ZOMBIES OF THE STRATOSPHERE and a Rex Allen western, OLD OVERLAND TRAIL. While these films are not exactly classics, Nimoy learned a lot from them, picking up tips that helped him many years later when he finally sat in the director's chair.

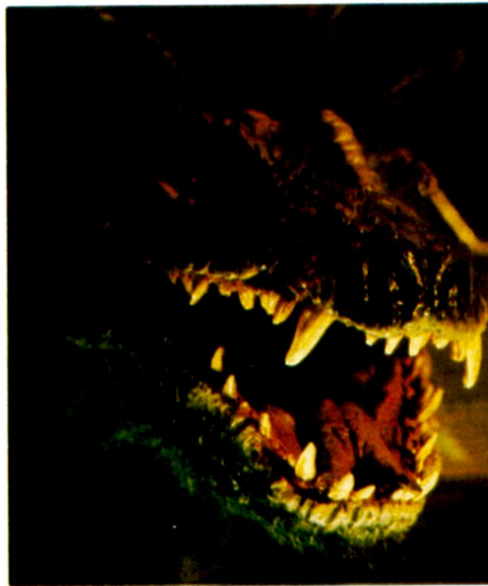
The directors at Republic were known for their ability to get the job done—staying on schedule, on

budget, shooting fast, while getting maximum production values up on the screen.

"I've had a lot of experience at shooting fast and not only at Republic," Nimoy said, laughing. "I worked in a lot of early half-hour television shows that were shot in two or three days—programs like SEA HUNT and HIGHWAY PATROL. Speed in production is something I'm used to."

The STAR TREK television series, for which Nimoy did 78 shows in three years, was turned

Makeup designs by Tom Burman: Left: Merchantman crew member; Middle: Kruge's pet mascot; Right: Alan Miller as a bar room character encountered by Dr. McCoy.



out at the rate of an episode every six shooting days, on a very tight schedule and budget. "There was simply no time for fooling around," said Nimoy. "It was a highly professional, highly-honed production schedule. When you move up to an elaborate budget where you strive for something better in quality, the question becomes finding a balance between the best use of the dollar and speed.

"It is possible to turn out an hour-and-a-half movie in two or three weeks, but you certainly can't get *the production values that you want or an audience demands today in that kind of time,*" he continued. "I think we did a very good job on STAR TREK III of finding a balance and using the time and dollars very effectively because there is an awful lot of stuff on the screen for the time and money we spent."

An example of the production's attention to detail are the computer graphics visible on viewscreens throughout the film. There are four starships in STAR TREK III—the Enterprise, Merchantman, Bird of Prey and Grissom—each with numerous screens. Three companies were hired to produce more than 600 different read-outs, which were transferred to videotape.

Nimoy coordinated all the computer graphics using a remote video truck located off-stage. The read-outs, often containing key storypoints, could be piped in precisely on cue for each take.

A large, sprawling production, STAR TREK III took over the use of most of Paramount's sound stages in Hollywood. The versatile Stage 9 hosted the Enterprise bridge and transporter room, and the sick bay for the Bird of Prey. Corridors for the Enterprise wind their way between these sets. A set for a 23rd Century San Francisco bar was also housed on the Stage 9.

Stage 5 held the bridge of the Merchantman, a set originally used as the bridge of the Klingon vessel seen at the beginning of STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE. The stage also housed two sets reused from STAR TREK II, the Enterprise torpedo room and docking bay, with the latter redressed as the bridge of the Bird of Prey. The stage also contained the set of a Vulcan altar on which the script's climactic scenes were shot.

A Federation prison popped up on Stage 8, as did Kirk's San Francisco apartment, first seen in STAR TREK II. The major portion of this stage, however, served as a Vulcan temple.

Stages 12, 14 and 15 housed various locales of the Genesis planet. The script called for vast fissures, collapsing cliffs and a huge waterfall to be constructed.

With STAR TREK III deep into postproduction, Nimoy and company are busy tying up loose ends,

with ILM expected to deliver final special effects shots by the end of February.

Also completing work is composer James Horner, who scored STAR TREK II. Horner viewed a rough cut of the film to familiarize himself with the story's concepts and characters, and will have the final score ready by February.

According to Nimoy, the finished film *must* be ready by the end of April to meet the June 1 opening date. The short lead time between end product and release is further *intensified by the fact that 70 to 80 70mm prints have to be struck for the premiere. 70mm prints can be turned out at a rate of only about two a day.*

For Nimoy, taking on the directing of STAR TREK III has been the toughest assignment of his career. "It's an enormous experience," he said. "It's a two year commitment on one piece of work. It took more energy, more time, more emotional commitment than any one project that I've been involved in before.

"And there's no way to predict what effect it will have on my future," he continued. "I'm still open to acting ideas and, obviously, I'm very interested in directing again. But I feel kind of like a horse that has been put into the stall before a race. I'm in great shape. I'm ready. I feel good, and I feel well trained. When the gate opens and the horse comes out—we'll see what happens."

Nimoy is confident that the film will be well-received by the fans of STAR TREK. "I'm also hoping that people who have never seen STAR TREK will be attracted to it," he said. "I want to broaden our audience. This is my hope. Anything more would be prophecy." □



Kirk (William Shatner) grapples with Kruge on the surface of Planet Genesis.

Leonard Nimoy behind the camera, filming a scene of Sulu (George Takei) during his visit to a Federation Prison.



COMING

ICE PIRATES

CAPTAIN BLOOD meets *STAR WARS*
in Stewart Raffill's pirates-into-space saga.

By Dennis Fischer

Mixing two vastly different genres—science fiction and the swashbuckler—ICE PIRATES will blast buccaners into outer space for the first time.

Produced by John Foreman, the \$9 million "sf swashbuckler" stars Robert Urich (ENDANGERED SPECIES), Mary Crosby, John Carradine and ex-football star John Matuzak.

Stewart Raffill directed and co-wrote the pirates-in-space saga with Stanford Sherman (who also penned the swashbuckling fantasy KRULL). MGM UA is set to release the film in late March.

Urich plays an Errol Flynn-like pirate who attacks spaceships and steals their water, the most precious commodity in a galaxy far, far away. On one of his raids, he gets captured, meets a beautiful princess (Crosby), and together they escape in search of a "mysterious" seventh planet, which is flooded with water.

"The studio owned a lot of old films that they thought might play well in space—like KING SOLOMON'S MINES," said director Raffill, whose credits include SEA GYPSIES and HIGH RISK. "I don't know all the various treatments that the story went through, but the KING SOLOMON'S MINES premise was lost along the way. But the premise of a universe without water, and a mythical 'water planet,' evolved from that, and became the basis of the story."

Raffill admits that his film borrows freely from many of the old swashbucklers. "We saw CAPTAIN

BLOOD and some other movies in that genre, and our characters became somewhat colored in that manner," he explained. "If you create original characters that nobody has any connection with, you can spend a lot of time trying to explain motives and attitudes. That may be interesting, but in the story we wanted to tell, we didn't want to take the time to do that. We tried to go with characters that had implicit things that we recognize, and take it from there."



Robert Urich, Mary Crosby

Capturing the spirit of the pirate movies was a major concern of Raffill's, but he didn't forget that his film was set in space. Rewriting the script to make it more of a "lighthearted science fiction spoof," he toyed with several of the genre's trappings—spaceships, laserguns, exotic locations and evil robots. In ICE PIRATES, characters don't do their own fighting, but send their personal robots into battle to fight for them.

Raffill, however, had problems coming up with the proper "look" for the robots. He first brought in illustrators, who sketched while he described what he wanted. "But I'm not a particularly good artist," he said, "and I just couldn't get across what I wanted. Then someone suggested I try a sculptor."

Enter Michael McCracken, a veteran makeup artist and sculptor whose credits include PLANET OF THE APES, THE WIZ, HEART-BEEPS and POLTERGEIST. McCracken briefly met with Raffill, and quickly went to work, producing nearly four dozen individual suits in a tight five months.



Robert Symonds (l), Mary Crosby and Robert Urich escape from a huge desert battle craft (built around a conventional dune buggy) in Stewart Raffill's ICE PIRATES. The film borrows from both science fiction and swashbuckler genres.

"We spent quite a bit of money developing the robots," said Raffill. "But instead of having them exceptionally high-tech, we went for a more organic, steam-engine period of mechanics. Most of the robots in other films are produced by a vacuum press, which just gives a one-dimensional print out of the material. We went with a different system where we could create underlying edges, and the robots turned out well."

In addition to robots, ICE PIRATES also serves up an array of alien creatures, masterminded by Morris Stein. A second-generation makeup artist with a variety of film and TV credits, Stein supervised a crew that was responsible for a wide variety of special makeup effects, including disembodied heads, elaborate aliens and a Frog Lady.

One of the most interesting creatures was a "Space Herpi" designed and built by Steve LaPorte (SLAPSTICK, SPACEHUNTER). Described in the script as a cross between a tapeworm and a filled condom, the "Space Herpi" is a parasitic, phallic

creature about seven inches long that pops up at odd moments to terrorize the crewmembers.

"I originally had only three weeks to do the job, but Stewart Raffill liked it so much that he wanted me to perfect it," LaPorte recalled. "I was on the film for a total of six weeks." LaPorte also made a 24-inch Herpi puppet, with a fully articulated face and mouth for close-ups.

While Raffill wanted to make a film with sweep and grandeur, he also had to contend with limited budgets of time and money. Because a \$9 million budget doesn't buy what it used to—especially on a unionized, studio production—Raffill and crew were forced to use existing locations in the Los Angeles area.

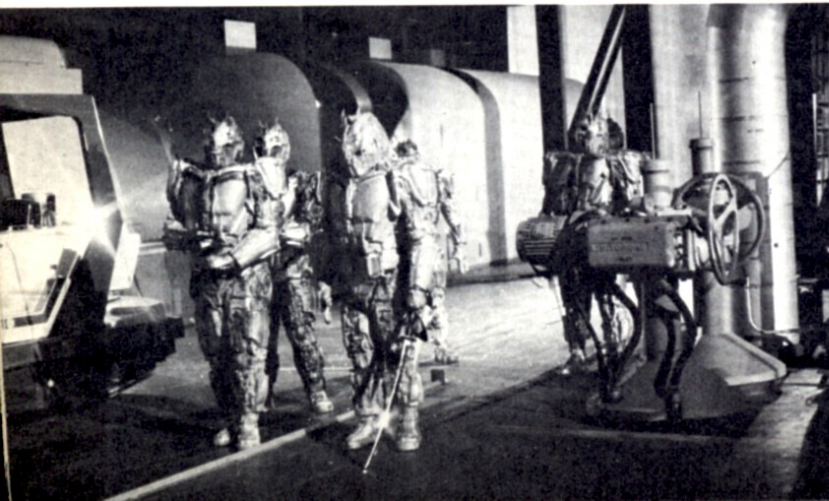
Location manager Ira Rosenstein and production associate Eric Johnson looked at practically every large industrial site in Southern California to locate those with "futuristic" possibilities. A major find was the sprawling Bethlehem Steel plant, located in Vernon, California, which closed in late 1982. The plant's furnace room alone is about the size of three "normal" sound stages, which helped Raffill to get the feeling of scale he needed.

Other existing locations that were redressed for the film include an Anheuser-Busch plant, which shut down its main bottling line to let Raffill shoot interiors of a "factory" that castrates and lobotomizes victims; the Scattergood Power Plant, which became the interior of a freighter; and the Page Museum, which doubled as a rain forest.

Despite the budgetary restrictions, Raffill is pleased with the way ICE PIRATES turned out.

"I think it's very commercial," Raffill said. "It's not wrought with messages, but I think it's one of those films that you'll come out of laughing and having a good time." □

Left: A squad of robots roam through the furnace room of an abandoned Bethlehem steel plant, portions of which were redressed for a number of sequences. Right: Michael McCracken sculpts the basic robot prototype in clay. Director Stewart Raffill wanted ornate robots that would resemble old, rusty steam engines. In all, nearly four dozen finished suits were built.



OZ: THOUGH ITS BUDGET WAS SLASHED, PRODUCTION PUSHES AHEAD

After nearly a year of preproduction in London, Walt Disney Productions came close to shutting down work on *OZ* this past December because of the film's escalating budget. Producer Gary Kurtz was called to Hollywood for meetings with Disney's newly installed president of motion picture production, Richard Berger, and agreed to cuts to keep the project alive.

For example, Kurtz was forced to cut back on the use of foreign locales, and instead film on locations close to the production's home at EMI Studios, near London.

The budget flap is seen by insiders as having less to do with rising costs than with the departure from Disney of Tom Wilhite, Berger's predecessor, who originally devel-

oped the project with Kurtz. Wilhite was ousted from Disney last fall, after a string of expensive money-losers, including *TRON* and *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*.

With its title shortened from *RETURN TO OZ* (13:4:12), filming on the live-action feature is now set to begin early this year. Making his directorial debut is Oscar-winning sound editor Walter Murch, who is reportedly a walking encyclopedia of Ozology. Murch grew up reading the Oz books—there are more than 30, and Disney controls the film rights to all of them except *THE WIZARD OF OZ*—and he collaborated on the film's script with Gill Dennis. Murch was also the co-author of *THX-1138*.

Production designer Norman Reynolds, an Oscar-winner for both *STAR WARS* and *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*, is tailoring the look of the film to the artwork of John R. Neill, who illustrated many of the Oz books between 1904 and 1941.

The film's fantasy characters are being created with puppetry, a la *THE DARK CRYSTAL*. Work is being supervised by Lyle Conway, an alumnus of Jim Henson's Muppet workshop and one of the key puppet supervisors on *THE DARK CRYSTAL*, responsible for Aughra and the Skeksis.



Fairuza Balk

In addition to such favorite Oz characters as the Tin Man, Scarecrow and Cowardly Lion, Conway is mechanizing Witch Princess Mombi, who keeps a ghastly collection of interchangeable heads; Jack Pumpkinhead, Dorothy's friend and ally; and the evil Nome King.

After a lengthy casting search across the United States and Canada, newcomer Fairuza Balk, a nine-year old Vancouver schoolgirl, won the pivotal role of Dorothy. Balk was the youngest of the hundreds of girls who auditioned. No other casting information has been released. □

GREYSTOKE: THE LEGEND OF TARZAN

Previews indicate that audiences, as well as the natives, are restless.

By Frederick S. Clarke & Robert T. Garcia

GREYSTOKE, a supposedly faithful retelling of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes*, appears to be evoking big yawns, or worse, from preview audiences.

After four disastrous previews in which audiences were alternately bored by the film's overlong, three-hour running time, or howled with laughter in all the wrong places, Warner Bros quietly scrapped plans to release *GREYSTOKE* last Christmas. The film, costing nearly \$16 million, including a reported \$7 million for its ape makeups alone, is now set for release March 30, a slow boxoffice period in which it may have little chance to make back its huge production costs.

Indications for the film were not

good as early as last September, when a slide presentation about the production met with derision from an audience at the World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore. The slide show was hosted by makeup artist Rick Baker, who got hooted by the audience when the presentation began with slides of Tarzan in a kilt. This image of the jungle Lord's British heritage is taken directly from the novel. The fact that such a knowledgeable audience found it unacceptable does not bode well for the film's touted adherence to Burroughs.

Baker, who tried unsuccessfully to sidestep the audience reaction by joking about it, declined to be interviewed. Jeff Walker, a publicity spokesman for Warner Bros who organized the slide show, denied that Baker was ever hooted.

Walker did acknowledge the bad response by preview audiences that scuttled the film's original release. At the time, Warner Bros was rumored to have considered releasing the picture directly to videotape to save on the millions of dollars earmarked for its marketing and promotion. Instead, a new team of editors was brought in and told to shorten the film by an hour.

As recently as January, however, the film was still deemed unreleasable at a preview in Denver. Walker cites a more recent, February preview in San Diego as having a "rousing reception," and says the film has been trimmed by 25 minutes.

What preview audiences found objectionable about the film is that only one-third of it takes place in Africa, Tarzan's expected turf. Most of the film is an unexciting "Upstairs-Downstairs" sitting-room drama, which depicts Tarzan as a British Lord on his ancestral estate in Scotland.

Hugh Hudson, the director of the very British Oscar-winner *CHARLOTS OF FIRE*, envisioned *GREYSTOKE* as another paean to British heritage. In Hudson's film, Tarzan must court Jane on British soil instead of sweeping her off her feet and whisking her away into the passionate jungle. Despite the film's subtitle about the Tarzan "legend," the film loses sight of the character's myth and mystique.

The problem with Hudson's approach lies in the script he commissioned from Michael Austin, based on a screenplay by Robert Towne (credited as P. H. Vazak). Austin's script reduces Tarzan to a character who is buffeted by events. In the Burroughs book, Tarzan is always the master of any and all situations. Austin's changes render Towne's lovingly accurate recreation of Burroughs' novel unfaithful in spirit, if not detail.

Said to be intact through all the recutting is the extended jungle sequence involving baby Greystoke's upbringing by a family of apes, a makeup *tour de force*, engineered by Oscar-winner Rick Baker. A crew of more than fifty makeup technicians worked on the convincingly realistic ape suits that consumed a staggering portion of the film's budget.

Director Hugh Hudson's inexperience with makeup techniques reportedly caused some problems during filming. The most complex and carefully detailed of all the suits was for Kala, the ape who mothers baby Greystoke (pictured in an issue of *Vanity Fair*). Apparently, the first scene Hudson shot with the suit was Kala's death, in which she is riddled by hunters' bullets and left for dead in the mud.

Baker is said to have been furious about the inappropriate schedule,



Christopher Lambert as Tarzan.

having to repair the suit for the rest of filming, which involved delicate close-up shots. Baker threatened to walk-off the picture when Hudson tried to prevent him from viewing rushes involving his own work.

Though Baker's makeup work is said to be the film's highpoint, the script woefully depicts the apes as just another band of smelly anthropoids. Unlike the book, in which Tarzan is at odds with all the males of the tribe, the film gives him an ape "father," a touch which consigns the character to a submissive role Burroughs never intended.

The expectation for *GREYSTOKE: THE CREATION OF THE LEGEND OF TARZAN* was that it would banish forever the damage done to Burroughs' work by the "Me Tarzan, You Jane" school of filmmakers. Though of a different stripe, Burroughs' fans apparently are to be treated to yet another cinematic exercise in frustration. □

Ape chic, Rick Baker's makeup and baby Greystoke as seen in *Vanity Fair*.



BATMAN

After a long vacation, the masked crimefighter is back at the movies.

By Dan Scapperotti

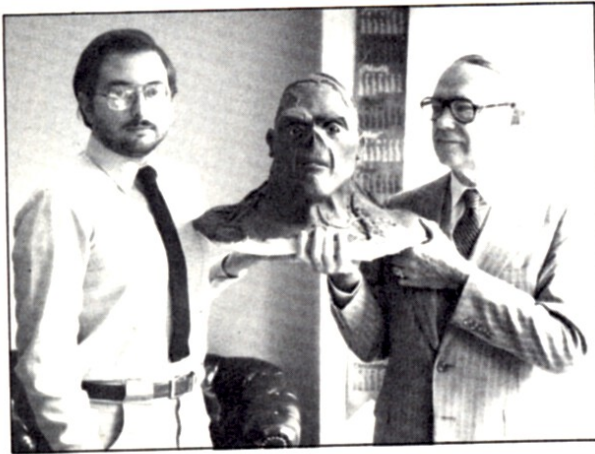
Batman is back! The crimefighter, who hasn't been around much since the cancellation of his hit '60s TV series, will return to the big screen after a long hiatus.

Producers Mike Uslan and Ben Melnick are putting together a new BATMAN, scheduled to go before the cameras next summer with a nearly \$20 million budget. The film is planned for a 1985 release.

Uslan and Melnick, who previously brought comic book hero SWAMP THING to the screen, are not using the campy BATMAN television series as their source of inspiration. They've decided that it's time to get back to the basics, the basics of the original Batman, who first appeared in *Detective Comics* in 1939.

"The project has to be done right," said Uslan. "The film must be about the creature of the night, and capture the spirit of what Batman was originally about and what the comic, by and large, has reverted to in the last couple of years."

Tom Mankiewicz is currently putting some finishing touches on the second draft of the script. His research centered around the earliest Batman stories found in *Detective Comics*, written by Bill Finger and illustrated by Bob Kane, as well as the Marshal



Producers Mike Uslan (left) and Ben Melnick pose with a bust of SWAMP THING, their first try at bringing a comic book hero to life.

Rogers/Steve Engleheart stories that appeared in a 12-issue run in 1978.

Mankiewicz is taking his job seriously, concerning himself with the smallest of details. "We got a call from Tom," recalled Uslan, "and he said, 'I'm working on the first Batcave scene. What is the date that goes on the giant penny?'"

"The Batcave is going to be reconstructed," Uslan added. "When you see it in the film, it'll be the Batcave that appeared in the comics: the mechanical dinosaur, the giant penny, the Joker's giant playing card. Tom wanted to know the right date on that penny. I took a quick look through my collection, and in 50 years I was apt to see 50 different dates on the penny. I went back to the early part of my collection, and I found the first issue with the Case of the Penny Plunderers—*World's Finest*, No. 31, from 1947. So that's the date that's going on the penny."

Mike Uslan promises a realistic, serious depiction of BATMAN, but one that bursts with

action and adventure. In addition, the new BATMAN will recount the origin of the crimefighter, something neither the previous films nor television series tackled.

The film will also expose a few surprises about Batman's original nature: the crimefighter was an avenger, who was not above killing the criminal elements he encountered. More than once, Batman gleefully threw offenders to their deaths from the tops of tall buildings.

Although Mankiewicz' script will faithfully adapt the original Batman legend, Uslan said there will be some small changes. He added that the script will keep away from the more blatant comic-book aspects.

"One of the things that bothered us was the bat flying in an open window, and Bruce Wayne saying, 'Ah, a bat. I'm going to be a bat,'" said Uslan. "Well, that's fine for the comics, but you'd have a hard time trying to sell that to an audience in a theater. I think that our script comes up with an absolutely ingenious way of explaining how this bat persona came to be."

Although no one is willing to discuss the actual plot of BATMAN, Uslan says the Joker will be the film's main nemesis, with a smaller appearance by another traditional villain. Batman will also go up against "normal" street crooks. Uslan added that although the character of Robin, the Boy Wonder, is absent from most of the film, he will make an appearance.

Casting for the feature has not been announced. "But if I had my choice of actors—living or dead—to play certain roles," Uslan said, "I would pick William Holden as Commissioner Gordon, and I think David Niven would make a great Alfred, Bruce Wayne's faithful butler." □



Left: Batman (Lewis Wilson) and Robin (Douglas Croft) as they appeared in a 1943 serial, their screen debut. Far Left: Bob Kane's cover art for a 1939 issue of "Detective Comics." The producers hope to recapture the dark, atmospheric flavor of the original DC comic books.



NEW MAGIC: SHOWSCAN PREMIERE

NEW MAGIC, the first film in Douglas Trumbull's new Showscan process, had its premiere February 9 at specially built theaters in Dallas, Texas and Springfield, Missouri. The 27-minute short features Gerrit Graham as a bungling projectionist, and Christopher Lee as his boss, as they show clips that showcase the new process.

Lee has announced that he will appear in an upcoming science fiction film in the new process. BIG BALL, a short featuring dune buggies announced as the first Showscan entry (14:25), will open in April.

Showscan theaters, part of Showbiz Pizza venues, are slated to open soon in Fairfax, Virginia and Huntsville, Alabama. Films screen once every hour. The admission is \$2 for adults, \$1 for the kids.

V:

MINI-SERIES RETURNS

An expanded five-part, 10-hour sequel to last year's popular NBC mini-series airs over a two-week period beginning April 29. The series' creator, Kenneth Johnson, is not involved in the production, which is directed by Richard T. Heffron for producers Daniel H. Blatt and Robert Singer.

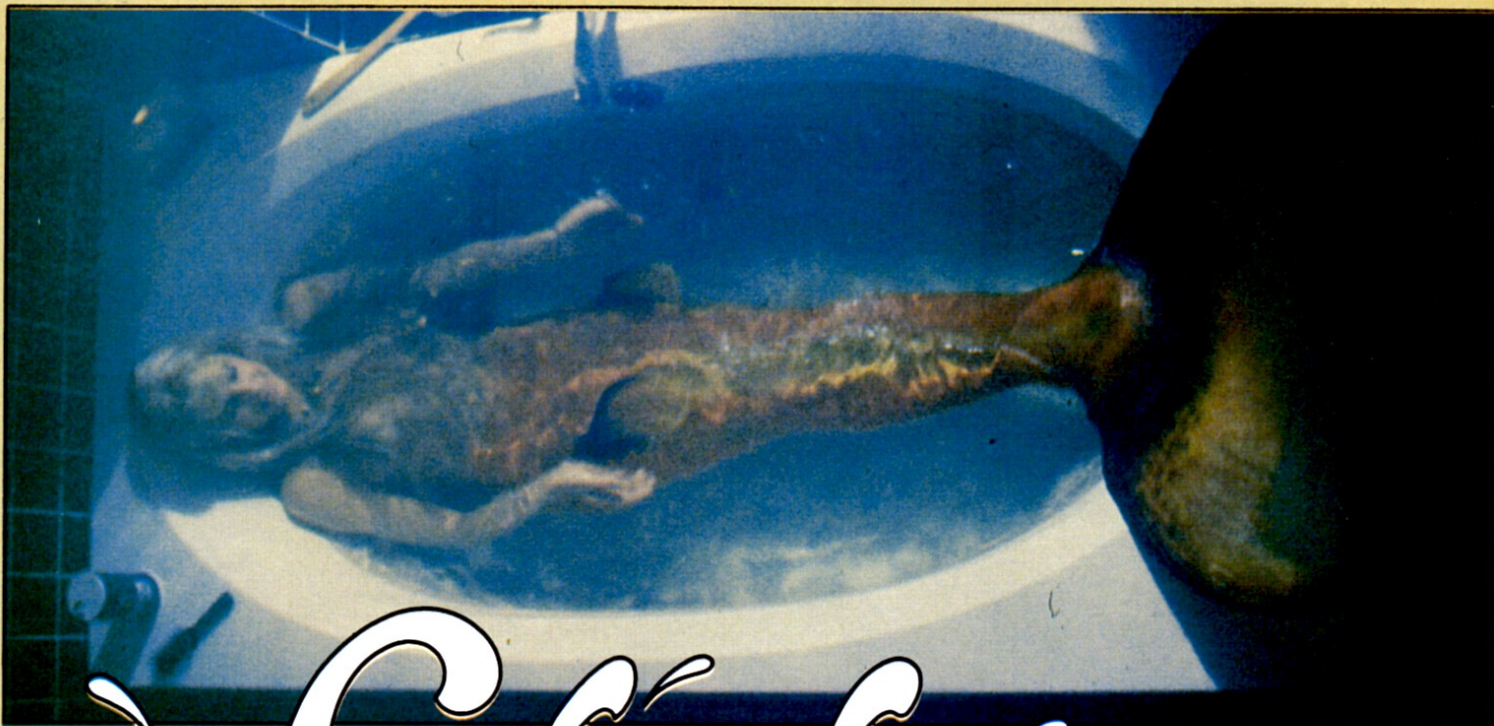
Modelmaker Greg Jein provided a new miniature of the alien mothership for effects filming.

RONNIE ROCKET: LYNCH TO LAUNCH

Evidently delighted with the job David Lynch has done to bring DUNE to the screen, producer Dino De Laurentiis has signed on to develop one of Lynch's personal, pet projects. A blend of fantasy, comedy, and music, akin to Lynch's ERASERHEAD, the film is set in a kind of '50s milieu that is readily familiar yet strangely bizarre. Special effects expert Carlo Rambaldi is at work creating the film's title character.

THE TALISMAN: SPIELBERG SOUGHT

This forthcoming novel co-authored by Stephen King and Peter Straub has been acquired for production by Universal. The story, a fantasy, which concerns a young boy's trek across America, is being acquired by the studio with director Steven Spielberg in mind. Universal produced the film version of Straub's GHOST STORY. The book is due to be published by the Viking Press in September.



Relaxing in a tub after a hard day on her new feet, Daryl Hannah models the elaborate mermaid costume designed and built by Robert Short.

Splash

Director Ron Howard & producer Brian Grazer create a love story for the 1980s: boy meets fish.

Article by Michael Mayo

This year, Steven Spielberg will give us a rousing RAIDERS II, and Leonard Nimoy will surely vulcanize STAR TREK III. But here's one for 1984 that's going to surprise you.

Ron Howard (yes, *that* Ron Howard) may steal a little of the big boys' thunder this spring with SPLASH, a sparkling charmer that will be a strong contender for best comedy this year. The \$8 million film has already been shown to several test audiences with near-unanimous approval.

SPLASH marks an unusual collaboration. Although the film is financed by Walt Disney's distribution arm, Buena Vista, the filmmakers—Howard and producer Brian Grazer—are the unDisney-like creative team behind 1981's sleeper hit, NIGHT SHIFT.

They press the point that SPLASH, some six years in development at two other studios, is an independent production which received no interference from the Disney organization. So while the film still qualifies as a family comedy, it's tempered by a gently rude and street-smart sense for dialogue and characters.

Tom Hanks (of the short-lived television series BOSOM BUDDIES), stars as Allen Bauer, a successful

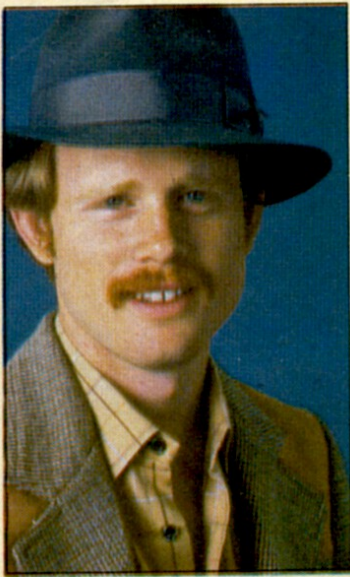
young produce wholesaler whose love life has been less than fruitful. Hanks falls under the spell of mermaid Daryl Hannah after she saves him from drowning off the shores of Cape Cod. Hannah, who assumes a distinctly human form out of the water, takes a shine to Hanks and follows him to New York City, where she can stay on land for only six days before she can no longer change back into a mermaid.

Complicating matters is a nutty but determined scientist, SCTV's Eugene Levy, who will stop at nothing to prove to his disbelieving colleagues that mermaids do exist. Another SCTV alum, John Candy, costars as Hanks' fun-loving older brother.

Although mermaids have been the subject of folktales and earlier films—most notably 1948's MR. PEABODY AND THE MERMAID and at least two subsequent X-rated productions—producer Brian Grazer pointed to his own unhappy love life as the film's inspiration. "It was about six years ago, and I started reflecting on my life and the girls I was dating," Grazer recalled of the project's genesis. "Los Angeles is an industry town, and a lot of the good looking girls here are in the business and have all these phony bullshit standards. So I thought, wouldn't



Daryl Hannah, as a mermaid in human form, innocently walks nude through a crowd of tourists before being arrested at the Statue of Liberty.



Director Ron Howard

it be great to go out with a girl that was uncluttered, and didn't have all that phony junk in her? Then I thought, 'What about a mermaid?' I imagined that a mermaid would be an extraordinarily beautiful girl with an unblemished outlook towards life, and the story grew from there."

Grazer, who started his career in Hollywood as a \$5 an hour law clerk in the Warner Bros legal department, wrote the story and sold the concept to MGM/UA. Bruce Jay Friedman (*STIR CRAZY*, *DOCTOR DETROIT*) was hired to develop a screenplay. Grazer offered the finished script to Ron Howard to direct, after the two of them had wrapped the filming of *NIGHT SHIFT*.

"I really dragged my feet at the time because I didn't want to do a dopey, lightweight film about a mermaid," said Howard, whose previous credits include three made-for-television dramas and 1974's *GRAND THEFT AUTO*, a \$600,000 feature for Roger Corman that earned a healthy profit and a number of favorable notices.

Boy gets fish, and vice-versa, as Daryl Hannah introduces Tom Hanks to the joys of the watery kingdom. Hannah surprised the filmmakers by her grace and stamina under water, and performed all of her own stunts and swimming scenes.



"I just didn't find Friedman's script that believable," Howard continued. "There was some romance, but there was also a tremendous amount of underwater stuff... a whole society of merpeople. This society was kind of funny, but the underwater story made the *topside* story hard to develop, and *that's* the story I was interested in. I felt the picture ought to be more romantic, and that you ought to have a real emotional investment in these people and their future together."

Howard agreed to work on the script with new writers, and Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandell—the writing team responsible for *NIGHT SHIFT*—were brought on board. "They had some great ideas," said Howard. "They helped make it more of a character film instead of a gimmick film. Once we had that structure, I had no more questions about doing the movie."

When MGM/UA put the project into turnaround, Grazer struck a deal with the Ladd Company. At the time, Rastar mogul Ray Stark was also developing a Warren Beatty vehicle called *MERMAID* that looked hot, or at least the credits did: Herbert Ross was set to direct a Robert Towne script, and Carlo Rambaldi was to design the mermaid. In a move the now-floundering company must regret, Ladd dropped *SPLASH*, not wanting to compete. When a threatened strike by the Screen Actors' Guild slowed the development of *MERMAID*—momentum that it never regained—Grazer was able to get *SPLASH* headquartered as an independent production at Walt Disney's Burbank studios.

When it came to casting the mermaid, Grazer knew the choice would be crucial; the credibility of the film rested squarely on the role, and the ability of an actress to bring it off. Daryl Hannah had caught Grazer's eye as the replicant Pris in *BLADE RUNNER*, and the producer approached her with the part.



Although playing a mermaid had been a childhood fantasy of hers, Hannah refused to even read the screenplay. Apparently, Hannah was trying to develop Hans Christian Anderson's *The Little Mermaid* as a film on her own, and was angered that another filmmaker was going to do "her" film first. Eventually, Hannah's agent prodded her to read the script, and when she did, she fell in love with the part.

"I felt that the character was already a part of me," Hannah recalled. "She is very close to the child-like side of me. All I had to do in acting was just switch into that frame of mind, and there I was."

Howard concurs about Hannah's instincts for the part. "I pretty much just turned her loose," he said. "I think Daryl sometimes feels just a little out of step with the rest of society because she's an interesting, quirky person with her own definite set of values and codes. I really think she was inspired the whole time we were doing it."

In some scenes, Hannah was

forced to call on more than inspiration. The underwater scenes had been trimmed back from the original Bruce Jay Friedman script, but some would be needed to establish that the ocean was her home. After looking at a number of alternatives involving special effects, Grazer and Howard decided to shoot the scenes 50 feet beneath the surface of the clear waters off the Bahamas.

Elaborate preparations were made for the 16 days of undersea filming, including lengthy rehearsals, detailed storyboards and scuba training. The greatest demands were placed on Hannah, who was often in the water for six hours at a stretch. The actress had to work in a restrictive costume without a mask, swimming from one safety diver to another for her supply of air. And since she wore no wet suit—her "tail" only came up to her waist—the chilly water temperature was also a factor.

Cinematographer Jordan Klein (*NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN*, *DAY OF THE DOLPHIN*), a life-long diver who would head the



MERMAID Daryl Hannah poses in the costume created by makeup effects artist Robert Short. Hannah had to be crazy-glued into the suit, once each day, during filming in the Bahamas.

film's underwater unit, started meetings with Howard by bluntly saying what he tells everyone else: no matter how hot your stars think they are, forget it. They won't be able to withstand the physical stress of a full underwater schedule.

Most of Hannah's underwater scenes were to be frontal close and medium shots. Her distinctive features would be visible because her hair was to be set to cover her breasts as she swam. The use of a double would have to be limited. Howard started working with Hannah in a mock-up tail to gauge how much of the work she could do, and was surprised to find that the athletic Hannah equaled the stamina of her stunt double.

The two weeks of underwater shooting was still no picnic, however. After trying various ways of fastening Hannah into her tail, makeup designer Robert Short

finally hit upon the only solution that worked: Hannah was crazy-glued into the tail, with a seam along the back, hidden by a dorsal ridge. Because of the time involved in putting on the suit and then repairing the tail after taking it off, Hannah could only be glued-in once each day.

Underwater, Hannah worked in chilly 30 foot depths without a mask or wetsuit top while off-camera; either would have smudged a special body makeup Short had devised to give her upper body better color underwater. Howard, who says he still feels a little guilty at the discomfort she had to go through, was amazed by Hannah's endurance.

"It was incredible to see how tough she was," said the director. "She'd swim and swim, holding her breath . . . and you'd look at the dailies, and it didn't look like she was straining at all."

Klein also had words of praise. "This is one of the few times I've been wrong about actors, and I don't mind it one bit," said the

underwater photographer. "I can't say enough about working with Daryl, Tom Hanks and Ron Howard."

Coming to filmmaking as an actor in various types of comedy instead of from a more technical direction seems to have given Howard a confidence and self-assurance that his co-workers appreciate and enjoy. Howard traces his maturing as a director to working with late director Tom Gries on a TV movie, *THE MIGRANTS*. Howard remembered the freedom and involvement Gries allowed him as an actor, and he has tried to create the same atmosphere on his productions. Howard makes it clear who has the last word, but prefers to have his cast and crew creatively involved.

Postproduction is no different, and unlike the paranoid shrouds of secrecy that have been thrown over many genre productions, Howard felt it was vital to test his films extensively against regular audiences.

Once *SPLASH* was assembled in

rough form, Howard previewed the film as often as every other night, checking to see how well the film's elements integrated emotionally for viewers, as well as watching for pacing problems. As the star and director of *HAPPY DAYS* on television, Howard found that taping the shows before a live audience was invaluable during editing.

"You could actually hear what particular lines got the laughs," he said. "I'm not one of those directors who huddles with the film and never shows it to anyone. I really try and cut the film to an audience, because they're the only ones who can really tell you whether a film is working or not."

"Making the relationship work between Daryl and Tom was a little tricky, because we had to make his reactions funny and charming," continued Howard. "We've been getting back preview cards that show the audience is responding not only to the jokes, but to the story as well, and that makes me feel good." □

CHILDREN OF THE CORN

The Stephen King bumper crop ripens with New World joining the horror harvest.

By Paul R. Gagne

CHILDREN OF THE CORN, New World Pictures' \$3 million adaptation of the Stephen King story from the *Night Shift* anthology, is due for release in March, making it the fourth King-based film in less than a year. The film was shot on a 27-day schedule in Iowa during September and early October, with newcomer Fritz Kiersch directing. Terence Kirby, Kiersch's partner in a commercial filmmaking company, co-produced the picture with Donald P. Borchers, New World's Senior Vice President of production and creative affairs.

Night Shift, King's collection of short fiction, has been the source of several ill-fated projects that have been announced over the past couple of years, including a television series and anthology feature films—often with scripts written by King. His CHILDREN OF THE CORN script was initially optioned some four years ago by Maine director Harry Wiland, who, with producer Joseph Masfield, had arranged financing with Home Box Office and 20th Century-Fox. The project was set to go when the latter backed out, leaving the filmmakers some \$2 million short of their projected budget. Since then, said King, "The thing's been brokered so many times that I don't even know who's owned it."

Eventually, however, the project was picked up by Hal Roach Studios, at which point screenwriter George Goldsmith (FORCE: FIVE) was commissioned to rewrite King's script. One of Goldsmith's drafts came to Borchers' attention at New World.

A deal was quickly made between New World, Hal Roach Studios and Goldsmith, but summer was quickly coming to an end, leaving little time for preproduction before the corn (an essential "prop") ripened in the midwest. Borchers quickly brought in Kirby and Kiersch.

Said Kirby, "We had already talked

to him [Borchers] about doing some feature work, and we were waiting for the right project. We met with New World August 2nd and were in pre-production on August 3rd. By September, we were shooting in Iowa!"

During the hectic month of preproduction, Kirby and Kiersch worked on storyboards, rewrites and casting on the weekdays and flew to the midwest to scout locations over the weekend.

"The whole time we were in the preplanning stages, we had to check the corn harvest in several different states," Borchers said. "We were up against the gun. By holding the interiors to the end, we made it."

Goldsmith's script for CHILDREN OF THE CORN makes several key departures from King's draft, which closely followed the short story: Burt and Vicky Robeson are driving across the country in a last-ditch effort to save their failing marriage, hurling verbal daggers at each other along the way. Burt accidentally runs over a young boy, but finds that his throat was cut before stumbling onto the road. They take the body into the next town, but Gatlin appears deserted. Ledgers in the town's church clue Burt that something sinister is going on: the children of the town appear to have gone crazy in 1964, murdering all of the adults and forming a religious cult that worships a demonic figure, referred to only as "He who walks behind the rows."

In a sudden encounter with the children, Vicky is carried off and presumably murdered as Burt escapes into the rows of corn, where he ultimately confronts the demon.

King's story offers only the bare essentials for a film plot. "It's not really developed," said Goldsmith. "It's dream-like, which is characteristic of King's work. It touches those parts of our subconscious where we harbor irrational thoughts. I wanted to make clearer, more linear, certain ideas he touched upon but did not



Courtney Gains as Malachi, one of the evil CHILDREN OF THE CORN.

develop."

In particular, King's "cult" is left fairly vague. In the short story, we are given a quick glimpse at the children's lives at the end, but not much else is detailed. Goldsmith's script adds and elaborates on the children's characters—two new characters, Job and Sarah, are young children who resist the influence of the cult and aid Burt and Vicky.

Conceptually, Goldsmith felt that King had touched on an important idea relating to cult psychology. "It's the idea of dogma being an evil thing, and that people who are exposed to a steady stream of dogma are susceptible to a very dangerous kind of blind faith," Goldsmith said. "CHILDREN OF THE CORN is really about a group of kids who have been heavily exposed to religion and certain dogmatic ideals."

As with the film version of CUJO, the most significant change made for the movie is its ending. King's is frankly downbeat, culminating with the death of the husband.

"It's OK sometimes if the protagonist dies at the end, but it's not often that the film succeeds commercially," said Goldsmith, the screenwriter. "I also felt that the ideas I wanted to develop and express in the script precluded the defeat of my pro-

tagonists. Fritz and Terry agreed that it *should* be more of an upbeat ending."

If there is any one element on which the aesthetic integrity of a film version of CHILDREN OF THE CORN hinges, it's probably the way in which "He who walks behind the rows" is presented. If the film were to actually show the monster, it could easily trivialize the story—one can envision a ridiculous-looking humanoid entity with glowing red eyes and cornstalks sticking out of its head.

Thankfully, the film's climax will not show any but the most subtle, fleeting glimpses of the creature. "It remains very abstract," Goldsmith said. "It's what you *don't* see that scares you."

What *will* be shown are the effects of the creature's presence. "He has the ability to make the earth move, the clouds come in, the corn part," he said. "That's where most of the special effects come in. You see the capabilities, but not the monster."

The film's special effects, executed by Wayne Beauchamp, Eric Rumsey and Richard Wood, included getting the earth to "move" and chase the characters. "The biggest effects problem was doing it all in the first two-and-a-half weeks of filming—because of the corn," Kirby said. "We were under a lot of pressure to get it done and working at night [the story takes place in one day, with the climax occurring after dark] always slows you down."

Co-producer Donald Borchers is optimistic about CHILDREN OF THE CORN after previews of the film sans music and effects. "You have to keep explaining that 'When the music comes in, you're gonna jump out of your seat.' But just from the rough cut, we've already got people screaming."

Added Goldsmith, "I hope the film is controversial, enlightening and intelligent. There are going to be people who will understand the underlying metaphors and ideas, and people who won't. They'll both come out of the theater feeling satisfied." □

John Franklin as young preacher Isaac (left) leads the congregation of his demon cult, during worship in the fields (right).



BIOHAZARD

Mixture of E.T. and ALIEN boasts solid production values on amazingly low budget.

By Dan Scapperotti

Working with a miniscule budget of \$250,000, producer/director Fred Olen Ray is putting the finishing touches on BIOHAZARD, a mad monster-on-the-loose movie to be released by 21st Century.

The film's story begins in a laboratory, where a top-secret experiment in matter transference results in the materialization of a casket-shaped object from another dimension. Out pops a nasty little alien, who escapes and goes on a killing rampage.

"The monster is only four feet high—a cross between E.T. and Alien," said Ray. "I wanted to reverse the situation where the monster is huge. I was just tired of seeing the monster towering over everybody, and I thought it would be interesting

Loren Crabtree finds husband Richard Hench, a victim of the monster. The makeup is designed by John McCallum.



if ours could jump out of garbage cans."

The creature injects its victims with a lethal fluid, which makes them foam at the mouth before dying. "It's a cheap effect, but an inexpensive little trick that gets a good reaction from the audience," said Ray.

For the creation of his monster, Ray contacted Kenneth Hall, who recently finished work on METAL-*STORM* and *SPACEHUNTER*. Using foam rubber, Hall constructed a monster suit, which was built piece by piece on Ray's young son.

Most of the other makeup chores were handled by John McCallum, who worked on Ray's last film, *SCALPS*, a blood-drenched shocker. Many of the effects in BIOHAZARD are also quite grisly, including a melting head *a la* RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK.

"Although we have that scene, and some others where people get their faces pulled off, we didn't want to make a 'maniac' film," said Ray. "That wasn't our idea when we made *SCALPS* either, but that is how it seems to have come out. We tried to be more aware of the effects this time."

Although restricted by his limited budget, Ray still wanted to get some familiar genre faces on the screen. He hired the bountiful Angelique Pettijohn, who appeared in the STAR TREK episode "Gamesters of Triskelion," MAD DOCTOR OF BLOOD ISLAND and the soon to be released LOST EMPIRE. The actress plays Lisa, a woman whose early use of an experimental drug has given her vast clairvoyant powers and enables her to track the fleeing alien.

Carroll Borland, who co-starred with Bela Lugosi 50 years ago in



The biohazard, played by 5-year-old Chris Ray, the director's son, surprises a garbage collector (George Randall). The monster suit is by Kenneth J. Hall.

MARK OF THE VAMPIRE, appears as the wife of an alcoholic farmer, who accidentally hits the monster with his truck. Aldo Ray and Martin Landau also appear in the cast.

Financing BIOHAZARD was not an easy road. "We originally dealt with a guy named Ken Hartford, who used to be known as Kenneth Herts when he was a distributor," said Ray. "He was the original distributor of CARNIVAL OF SOULS [see 13:6/14:1:90]. Hartford now is involved with several companies, and one of them, Eastern Hemisphere, was putting up the money for our project."

While the film was in production, however, Eastern Hemisphere went out of business, leaving Ray and crew stranded. Suddenly, demands for unpaid bills and missed checks fell on the director. "Actually, it worked out for the best, because that was just before the MIFED film market," said

Ray. "I took a cassette of what we had shot to Europe and came back with more money than we had before."

Ray used Panavision equipment on the film, shooting, for the most part, in the streets and houses of the San Fernando Valley area. The director, however, didn't enjoy filming there. "The area is very uncooperative," he said. "You can't film in your own front yard without someone trying to bust you. Even if you have a permit, the cops will still try and shut you down."

Ray has better things to say about BIOHAZARD, and is confident that the film will succeed. "I've been trying to achieve a level of technical and professional proficiency for years at ridiculous budget levels," he said. "Now I finally feel that I've made it with BIOHAZARD. I'm not saying that it's the best script in the world, but I feel that technically the film is what I wanted." □

GREMLINS: JOE DANTE DIRECTS FOR SPIELBERG; FILM SELLS THE TOYS

Yet another top-secret project from "executive producer" Steven Spielberg, GREMLINS recently finished principal filming at Warner Bros under the direction of Joe Dante. The film is scheduled to be released on June 1, 1984. To keep his participation really low-key, Spielberg is said to be considering leaving his name off the credits.

Written by Chris Columbus, a 24-year-old New York film school graduate who submitted the screenplay to Spielberg, GREMLINS promises to be a very gory event—a long way from the relative sweetness of E.T. and POLTERGEIST. Insiders who read the script say it's funny, suspenseful and highly entertaining—in short the tightest and best-constructed story of any Spielberg film since JAWS.

Director Dante, who is used to working with blood, has carefully gone over the script, adding some of the quirky, personal touches found in his previous films, PIRANHA, THE HOWLING, and the "It's A Good Life" episode of TWILIGHT ZONE—THE MOVIE.

Starring Country-Western singer Hoyt Axton, newcomer Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates (FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH) and Polly Holliday, GREMLINS opens in Hong Kong, where an American businessman (Axton) buys gifts for his wife and children, but can't come up with something for his son (Galligan). Aided by a street vendor, Axton is led to a backroom, where he finds the film's title character in a cigar box. The man brings the cute and cuddly creature

home to his son, who is initially scared of it, but eventually the gremlin wins the boy over.

But then the nightmare begins. The son accidentally spills water on the gremlin, which divides into two. The "new" gremlin disappears and is later found munching on the family dog. The other gremlin is brought to school for show-and-tell, where a teacher also spills water on it. Dividing once again and growing to monstrous proportions, the creature eats the instructor for lunch. One gremlin begets another and another... and before long the town is swamped with the critters. Feeling responsible for the disaster, the boy takes them all on, scorching them with light—the gremlins' big weakness.

Like THE HOWLING, the elab-

orate special effects will mostly be done with puppetry—a current trend in Hollywood where stop-motion is considered unconvincing and out-dated. Insiders say many—but not all—of these effects are deliberately cartoonish, in order to "lighten" the dark, violent nature of the script. Because security has been ultra-tight, one special effects house reportedly could not admit it was working on the film.

Before long, however, this secrecy will disappear and consumers will be assaulted with an aggressive media campaign. The film may even have as much merchandising potential as E.T., with paperback rights already sold to Avon Books for six figures and Montgomery Wards bidding to be a GREMLINS toy vendor. □

THE PRIMEVALS

Charles Band revives interest in David Allen's ambitious stop-motion adventure.

By Charlotte Wolter

Dave Allen can't let himself believe it. Not after all the times he got his hopes up, only to be disappointed time after time after time.

But it looks like *THE PRIMEVALS* [8:14], the project Allen masterminded and has shepherded through innumerable delays and shutdowns, may finally make it to the screen. Although many uncertainties still remain, *THE PRIMEVALS* is a much more viable project today than it has been at any time since its apparent demise five years ago. At that time, in the midst of excited preproduction—with most of its storyboards and special effects designs already completed—financial problems at producer Charles Band's Empire Pictures abruptly closed the picture down.

Now, a healthier climate at Empire, which produced last summer's 3-D hit, *METALSTORM*, has prompted Band to resurrect the project with a \$6 million budget, his biggest to date. Furthering the proof of the film's development, big, splashy ads for *THE PRIMEVALS* have popped up in trade publications. Aware of Band's penchant for positive thinking, however, Allen is being especially cautious.

"During the first preproduction period five years ago, I had to listen to a lot of optimistic forecasting, then none of it came true," he said. "So now, though I want very much to believe it, I'm not certain what I ought to make of what he [Band] tells me."

Said Band, "I don't blame Dave for being skeptical. After all, the thing has sat for five years. There were two or three instances during that time when things got exciting again, but then it still didn't work out. As a result of that, I'd be surprised if Dave felt anything other than caution at this point."

In *THE PRIMEVALS*—a *LOST HORIZON*-type story—an expedi-



Allen's stop-motion model of a Yeti.

tion into the Himalayas is swept into a huge crater by an avalanche. The group discovers that the crater is inhabited by many unknown species, including a race of practically indestructible Lizard-men, who were created centuries ago by aliens.

The long delay in the production has necessitated some script changes, including the name of one of the main characters, Rondo Montana, which Band felt sounded too much like Indiana Jones in *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*. But Band said the changes will not undermine the script.

"My pictures have all suffered, without one exception, from a weak screenplay," Band said, frankly. "The whole approach on *THE PRIMEVALS* is a much more intelligent one, and the story revolves around the characters. Even in its original form five years ago, it was very special."

The film is slated to feature extensive special effects, especially stop motion animation, Allen's specialty. Allen had assembled an impressive special effects team five years ago, including Phil Tippett (best known for his work on the Rancor Monster and Jabba the Hutt in *RETURN OF THE JEDI*). Although none of the principal members of that earlier crew are available, Band is confident that Allen can once again gather together a talented group.

In addition to his special effects duties, Allen will share the producing and directing chores with Band. Although the details of their specific responsibilities have not yet been worked out, Allen seemed pleased with his working relationship with Band.

"Dave will have the type of role he deserves," Band said. "He is the creator and mastermind of the whole project. I'm just someone who fell in love with it and would like to be involved." □

BOXOFFICE SURVEY: 1983 RECAP

Leaving its competition far behind, George Lucas' and Richard Marquand's *RETURN OF THE JEDI* topped the charts in 1983's box office survey. The film racked up impressive figures, comprising nearly 90% of its studio's (20th Century-Fox) genre gross, 21% of the total genre take, and more than 8% of the year's entire boxoffice. *RETURN OF THE JEDI* also made more money than its three closest genre competitors combined.

Additional analysis of the 50 Top Grossing films as reported each week by *Variety*, reveals that horror, fantasy and science fiction films accounted for 38.4% of all film earnings, down from last year's 44%, a significant decrease in genre popularity.

Top grossing genre films of 1983 in the *Variety* totals are listed at right. Titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f) and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks in 1983 that each title made it into the Top 50 list. Please note that the dollar figures listed represent only a sample of a film's total earnings (averaging one fourth of a film's domestic gross).

Of the 425 titles that comprised the weekly listings, 126 or 29.8% were genre titles, down from last year's 32.8%. Breakdown by genre is as follows: 32 fantasy films, accounting for 7.5% of the total and 7.2% of receipts; 44 science fiction films, 10.3% of the total, but a rousing 23.2% of receipts; and 50 horror films, 11.7% of the total but only 7.9% of the receipts.

Compared to 1982's results, fantasy films dropped a huge 32% in total revenues, and horror films fell by 29%. However, grosses for science fiction films continued to skyrocket, jumping a big 21% over last year.

In breakdown by distributor (below), 20th Century-Fox, with seven films, snagged the top position with nearly 24% of the genre film business. Universal, which was last year's big winner with Steven Spielberg's *E.T.*, grabbed only 12.6% of the gross—a drop of more than 50%.

TOP TEN MONEY MAKERS

<i>RETURN OF THE JEDI</i> (Fox, sf, 31)	\$68,335,106
<i>WARGAMES</i> (MGM/UA, sf, 20)	\$24,349,810
<i>OCTOPUSSY</i> (MGM/UA, sf, 14)	\$18,990,323
<i>SUPERMAN III</i> (WB, sf, 10)	\$17,542,179
<i>NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN</i> (WB, sf, 12)	\$16,953,698
<i>JAWS 3-D</i> (Univ, h, 7)	\$11,987,750
<i>BLUE THUNDER</i> (Col, sf, 11)	\$11,887,036
<i>PSYCHO II</i> (Univ, h, 10)	\$ 9,634,378
<i>TWILIGHT ZONE—THE MOVIE</i> (WB, f, 9)	\$ 9,394,765
<i>ZELIG</i> (Orion, f, 20)	\$ 6,857,121

OTHER TOP EARNERS

<i>AIRPLANE II: THE SEQUEL</i> (Para, sf, 6)	\$2,461,715
<i>AMITYVILLE 3-D</i> (Orion, h, 4)	\$1,657,050
<i>BRAINSTORM</i> (MGM/UA, sf, 8)	\$3,166,557
<i>CHRISTINE</i> (Col, h, 3)	\$2,996,408
<i>CUJO</i> (WB, h, 10)	\$6,084,994
<i>CURSE OF THE PINK PANTHER</i> (MGM/UA, f, 3)	\$1,359,733
<i>CURTAINS</i> (Ind, h, 8)	\$1,283,711
<i>THE DARK CRYSTAL</i> (Univ, f, 11)	\$6,756,605
<i>THE DEAD ZONE</i> (Para, h, 8)	\$6,803,295
<i>THE ENTITY</i> (Fox, h, 8)	\$3,718,373
<i>E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL</i> (Univ, sf, 23)	\$1,482,704
<i>THE EVIL DEAD</i> (Ind, h, 18)	\$2,351,291
<i>GATES OF HELL</i> (Ind, h, 17)	\$1,967,351
<i>HERCULES</i> (MGM/UA, f, 4)	\$3,211,786
<i>HOUSE ON SORORITY ROW</i> (Ind, h, 15)	\$1,558,643
<i>THE HUNGER</i> (MGM/UA, h, 6)	\$2,193,051
<i>KISS ME GOODBYE</i> (Fox, f, 6)	\$2,813,530
<i>KRULL</i> (Col, f, 6)	\$4,675,693
<i>MAN WITH TWO BRAINS</i> (sf, 6)	\$2,127,521
<i>METALSTORM: DESTRUCTION OF JARED-SYN</i> (Univ, sf, 4)	\$1,989,999
<i>NIGHT OF THE ZOMBIES</i> (Ind, h, 9)	\$1,111,296
<i>NIGHTMARES</i> (Univ, h, 5)	\$2,484,906
<i>1990: THE BRONX WARRIORS</i> (Ind, sf, 9)	\$1,821,755
<i>ONE DARK NIGHT</i> (Ind, h, 10)	\$2,476,504
<i>PETER PAN</i> (BV, re-rel, f, 8)	\$2,329,334
<i>PIECES</i> (Ind, h, 10)	\$2,000,926
<i>MONTY PYTHON'S MEANING OF LIFE</i> (Univ, f, 10)	\$5,187,321
<i>RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK</i> (Para, re-rel, f, 16)	\$1,465,711
<i>SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS</i> (BV, re-rel, f, 6)	\$5,718,849
<i>SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES</i> (BV, h, 6)	\$2,214,884
<i>SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORB'N ZONE</i> (Col, sf, 5)	\$4,878,594
<i>STRANGE BREW</i> (MGM/UA, f, 4)	\$1,537,571
<i>STRANGE INVADERS</i> (Orion, sf, 4)	\$1,020,415
<i>TIMERIDER</i> (Ind, sf, 4)	\$1,865,760
<i>TREASURE OF THE FOUR CROWNS</i> (Ind, f, 12)	\$2,249,473
<i>VIDEODROME</i> (Univ, sf, 4)	\$1,112,859
<i>XTRO</i> (Ind, sf, 14)	\$1,622,505
<i>YOR</i> (Col, sf, 3)	\$1,381,782

GENRE FILM REVENUE BY DISTRIBUTOR

Distributor	# of Films	Earnings	% of Total
20th Century-Fox (Fox)	8	\$76,319,055	23.7%
MGM/UA	9	\$56,752,726	17.6%
Warner Bros. (WB)	8	\$51,543,369	16.0%
Universal (Univ)	8	\$40,636,519	12.6%
Columbia (Col)	5	\$25,819,503	8.0%
Paramount (Para)	8	\$13,462,580	4.1%
Buena Vista/Disney (BV)	7	\$12,620,457	3.9%
Orion	3	\$ 9,534,586	2.9%
New World (NW)	11	\$ 3,491,852	1.0%
Embassy (Emb)	2	\$ 193,632	0.2%
All Others (Ind)	52	\$33,778,685	10.5%

• Indicates a film originally released in 1982

Dave Carson's preproduction concept of an alien base in the Himalayas.



MUTANT

Director John "Bud" Cardos tries a new twist on Romero's "Living Dead" horror

By Dennis Fischer

Replacing Mark (THE HOUSE ON SORORITY ROW) Rosman at the last minute, veteran film director John "Bud" Cardos stepped in to film MUTANT, a \$3 million shocker due out in March from Film Ventures. The film stars Wings Hauser, Bo Hopkins, Jennifer Warren and Jody Medford and is being produced by Ed Montoro and Igo Kantor.

The plot centers around Josh (Hauser) and his brother Mike who are waylaid near a town called Goodland. They discover a hideously maimed corpse and call Sheriff Will (Hopkins), who is not too amused to find the body missing, though traces of an amber fluid remain. The sheriff shows the sample to his doctor friend Myra (Jennifer Warren), who in turn discovers that the fluid is a chemical toxin that kills by devouring red blood cells.

Josh meets Holly (Joy Medford), a local school teacher, and they find the body of a small girl in the school basement. They also discover that those who become infected turn into vampiric zombies and attack the living.

The film has gone through several title changes (earlier ones were NIGHT SHADOWS and TOXIC WASTE) and shifts in story focus and development.



Cardos

"MUTANT began as just a 'terror' picture," explained Cardos. "There was absolutely no action in the film. Now, there is an awful lot of action, perhaps more action than terror."

According to the director, the film deals with the horrors and uncertainties of chemical waste. "In MUTANT there's this company, called New Era, which gathers the chemical waste and stuffs it down old mine shafts," said Cardos. "The fumes from the chemicals get into the systems of the people who are working in the area. It clogs their blood stream and changes their blood. It becomes caustic and bursts from their bodies, first from the palms of their hands.

"They need blood to survive, so they attack others," he continued. "Sometimes their bite will change a person into a creature and sometimes it will kill them. We didn't make it the same each time."

The final result resembles a bigger-budgeted version of George Romero's NIGHT OF THE LIVING



Toxic waste turns a town into a mob of rampaging ghouls, thirsting for blood. The extensive makeup chores were handled by Eric Fiedler and Louis Lazzara.

DEAD, complete with elaborate makeup effects handled by a large crew. The film's makeup is by Eric Fiedler and Louis Lazzara, with Dave Miller in charge of latex prosthetics and effects, including now *di rigueur* bladder work.

"Any time you work with a lot of creatures, it's difficult," said Cardos. "The first ones weren't so good, so we had to take the time to develop them and work around the early versions."

Some of the more difficult scenes include a shot of a hand melting through a window, scores of pulsating heads, throats and faces, and a rousing conclusion in which Wings Hauser throws Molotov cocktails at the monsters.

"That scene was very difficult because you have to worry about the actors," said Cardos. "And you've got to take care of the stunt people so they don't get burned, and you've got 50 or 60 other people working around them to watch out for."

Cardos replaced earlier director Mark Rosman during the first few days of shooting. Reportedly, Rosman was falling behind and was blocking out the shooting in a precise manner that removed flexibility in the editing.

Cardos, who was sent by producer Montoro to look over Rosman's shoulder, was selected to replace him after being given only one day's preparation time. Although Cardos praised Rosman's ability, he acknowledged that because time meant money, someone else needed to take the helm.

"It's fine to go out and raise money and do a picture on your own," Cardos said. "TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE took Tobe Hooper two years to make, and it came out great. But the next two projects Tobe did—

well, he just couldn't handle them.

"Mark [Rosman] was no dummy," he continued. "He's very good in a lot of ways, but he didn't have enough experience to handle the crew. Seriously, these are 'budget' pictures. They may be made for millions and millions of dollars, but you still have to watch your budget. You've got to keep moving."

Cardos should know, considering his past experiences in the movie business. He's been an actor (at the age of five he co-starred in the OUR GANG comedies at MGM), a stunt man, an animal handler, a production manager, an art director (on THE DUNWICH HORROR), a set builder and, of course, a director. He directed his first film, a black western called SOUL SOLDIERS in 1972, and has specialized in action, horror and science fiction films ever since.

His first foray into horror science fiction was KINGDOM OF THE SPIDERS (1977), a film that featured scores of angry tarantulas. Since Cardos had past experience with animals (he was a bird handler for Hitchcock's THE BIRDS), he landed the assignment of director.

"The tarantulas in KINGDOM OF THE SPIDERS didn't really bother me," he said. "Most people don't know anything about them and are very scared of them. While filming, we didn't have any problems—not one person was bitten.

"However, handling the tarantulas was time consuming," he continued. "Especially in the scenes where you needed hundreds of them. Each tarantula had his own, individual container, because they are cannibalistic—they'll fight, and even eat each other. When the cameras start rolling, the handlers have to come out, pick up all these containers, get

them out of the way and then jump behind the camera."

Cardos' next film in the genre was THE DARK (1978), with William Devane and Cathy Lee Crosby. "Originally the monster was a large, retarded giant of a human being," he said. "It was raised in an attic by its parents, who would not let it out. The parents fed him, and the thing kept growing. It was definitely not a creature from outer space. Then we got halfway through the picture, and the producers decided to make him an electronic monster that shoots laser beams out of his eyes. It's a pretty decent picture, but I didn't like the way they wanted to change the creature at the last minute."

Cardos' experiences on Charles Band's THE DAY TIME ENDED (1978) were even less happy. Although the film sports elaborate special effects, Cardos considers the film his worst.

He is much more optimistic about MUTANT, however, and has only the highest praise for the cast and crew. He particularly credits the actors for their ensemble playing, Igo Kantor for his knowledge of editing, and Ed Montoro for putting the project together.

"I've been told through the grapevine that it could be quite a nice little sleeper," he said. "It will have Dolby sound, and the London Philharmonic will record the music, so it's not a little, cheap B-picture. We're trying to make it a quality film."

Cardos thinks MUTANT will excite and please audiences. "I like to lean toward action adventure—films that really thrill people," he said. "You have to keep the pictures alive. If audiences get bored in the first ten minutes, they'll give up on it. I don't think they're going to do that for this picture; it's going to grab them from the beginning." □

A victim of industrial pollution recoils in agony. Prosthetic makeup effects for the film were done by Dave Miller.



ZOO SHIP

Director Richard Shorr mounts stop-motion monster flick with a whiff of '50s nostalgia.

By Kyle Counts

In the spirit of such '50s genre classics as *THEM!*, *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* and *I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE*, director Richard Shorr (*WITCHES BREW*, *ONCE UPON A TIME*) mixes invading space ships, man-eating extra-terrestrials, and scared-to-death local "townies" to come up with *ZOO SHIP*.

Written by Shorr, his wife Catherine and celebrated matte artist Syd Dutton, the independent film was scheduled to begin shooting in January of 1984 for an early summer or fall release, though no U.S. distributor has yet been secured. The cast features Craig Wasson (*GHOST STORY*), James Whitmore, Audra Lindley, Keenan Wynn and Roddy McDowell.

"We wanted to make a film with the attributes of some of those great old '50s films—the shadowy, claustrophobic photography, the clear-cut right and wrong, the suspense generated by an alien threat," said Shorr. "We're making an expensive-looking, black-and-white movie in color. It'll have a starkly dramatic look, like the night cinematography of *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*."

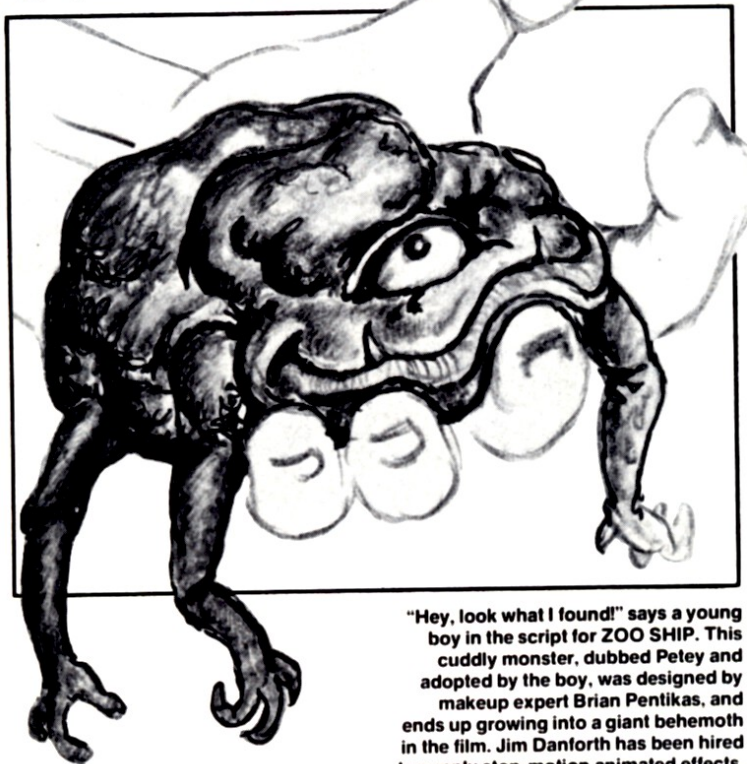
The project is the second for Shorr and Dutton, who have been longstanding friends since becoming neighbors in 1974. Together they wrote the 1978 Richard Benjamin/Lana Turner witchcraft story, *WITCHES BREW*, a film which was never released in this country, but pops up occasionally on cable TV.

Shorr feels confident, though, that *ZOO SHIP* is a commercially potent vehicle and was able to put the financing together in a relatively short span of time—considering the final draft was completed only this past summer.

Despite the film's minuscule budget (Shorr wouldn't give a figure, but emphasized that it is *low*), he's hired stop-motion expert Jim Danforth and Brian Pentikas, who already is at work on special creature make-ups.

Preliminary sketches by Pentikas and illustrator Charlie Chioto (who did preproduction work for *FLICKS* and will storyboard *ZOO SHIP*) feature an outlandish collection of outer-space monsters—from a "back-riding slug" to a creature which evolves, over the course of the film, from a palm-sized pet to a reptilian behemoth.

Amid the monsters and mayhem is a conventional, old-fashioned plot, underscored by in-jokes, cameo surprises and a generous amount of humor. (One scene shows a farmer's wife attempting to cook up what Shorr jokingly refers to as a "Galactic omelet" from an alien egg she finds in her chicken coop.)



"Hey, look what I found!" says a young boy in the script for *ZOO SHIP*. This cuddly monster, dubbed *Petey* and adopted by the boy, was designed by makeup expert Brian Pentikas, and ends up growing into a giant behemoth in the film. Jim Danforth has been hired to supply stop-motion animated effects.

The film opens with the proverbial stranger in town, Kyle Badaman (Wasson), driving his gleaming Maserati along the deserted highway of a backwoods town. Suddenly engulfed by a case of the shakes, he reaches for a mysterious vial of pills stashed in his glovebox, momentarily losing control of the wheel and sending his car into a ditch.

Though unhurt, he must wait for assistance and falls asleep. During the early hours of the morning, he awakens to an explosion of light and a shrill sound that could only mean the arrival of an other-worldly spacecraft.

Sure enough, when he returns to the crash site the following day, he discovers the wreckage of a huge, porcelain-like spaceship. But when he attempts to warn the sheriff (Whitmore) of what he's seen, he is dismissed as a druggie; the sheriff's deputy uncovered the bottle of pills in Badaman's glovebox, along with a bag of marijuana. Our protagonist quickly finds himself sharing a holding cell with the town drunk.

Eventually, Kyle discovers the space shuttle's unusual purpose: it's an interplanetary Noah's Ark searching for endangered species for an interstellar zoo. On its latest mission, the ship crash-landed on Earth, unleashing a bizarre gallery of deadly and hungry extraterrestrials.

Shorr is aware that *ZOO SHIP* may invite comparisons to Michael Laughlin's recent box-office failure,

STRANGE INVADERS, in its mixture of suspense and comedy. But he isn't worried, citing *STRANGE INVADERS'* weak script as that film's downfall.

"If your film doesn't have a script, it isn't going to go anywhere, no matter how good the effects are," said Shorr. "Anyone who thinks that special effects make a film doesn't know anything about the film industry. The problem with genre movies today is that there aren't enough properly written for the screen."

Shorr also doesn't like the way modern genre films constantly pander to the audience. "We should never underestimate the intelligence of our audience," said Shorr. "Nobody does dumb things like going into a dark cellar they know they have no business going into. In our film, you're going to root for the people, not the monsters."

With foreign rights to the film already purchased by Manson International, Shorr feels assured that a major studio will pick up *ZOO SHIP* for U.S. distribution once they see a rough cut. By selling the foreign rights first, the filmmakers get a monetary guarantee, as well as ownership of all domestic and ancillary rights.

"There's no way *ZOO SHIP* can not make money," Shorr stated confidently. "The movie is a machine, designed to separate 14-year-olds from dollar bills, and it will do that extremely effectively." □

CONAN II: FLEISCHER DIRECTS

Filming began November 1 at Churubusco Studios in Mexico City, and on locations in Juarez, Mexico for *CONAN, KING OF THIEVES*, sequel to *CONAN, THE BARBARIAN*. The Dino De Laurentiis production is directed by Richard Fleischer, with Arnold Schwarzenegger repeating the role of Robert E. Howard's sword & sorcery hero. Also returning from the earlier cast is Mako, as the mad sorcerer who narrates the film. S&M disco singer Grace Jones plays Zola, a female warrior. Basketball ace Wilt Chamberlain appears as Bambuta. The film promises more action and more sorcery than the John Milius original, for release July 13 by Universal.

2010: ODYSSEY TWO: KEIR DULLEA RETURNS

Keir Dullea as astronaut David Bowman and Douglas Rain as the voice of his H.A.L. 9000 computer, will recreate their roles from the original film in director Peter Hyams' sequel to 2001: *A SPACE ODYSSEY* (14:2:10). Also cast are Roy Scheider as Dr. Haywood Floyd, played by William Sylvester in the original, and Bob Balaban and John Lithgow, as scientists who accompany Floyd back to Jupiter and beyond, in search of Bowman and his Discovery spacecraft. Filming is currently underway on MGM's Stage 15 in Hollywood on mammoth sets kept secret by round-the-clock security guards. The soundstage is the largest available in the U.S. Effects are being provided by Douglas Trumbull's EEG company, for Christmas release.

SANTA CLAUS: BIG BUCKS HO! HO! HO!

Alexander Salkind, the mogul behind the *SUPERMAN* movies, plans to make *SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE* and spend close to \$50 million doing it. Producing is son Ilya and Pierre Spengler, for release by Tri-Star Pictures. Dudley Moore has been signed for the starring role, with preproduction underway at England's Pinewood Studios. Designing the film is Anthony Pratt, whose credits include John Boorman's *EXCALIBUR*. Extensive special effects will be the work of miniatures expert Derek Meddings, with flying scenes supervised by David Lane, who performed the same chores on *SUPERMAN III*. Script is by David and Leslie Newman, who wrote the *Man of Steel*'s last outing, the only one played strictly for laughs.

THE LAST STARFIGHTER

Robert Preston stars as "The Music Man" in outer space, with state-of-the-art computer-simulated effects.

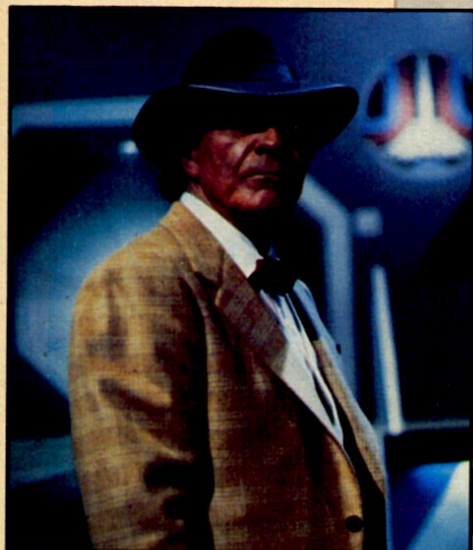
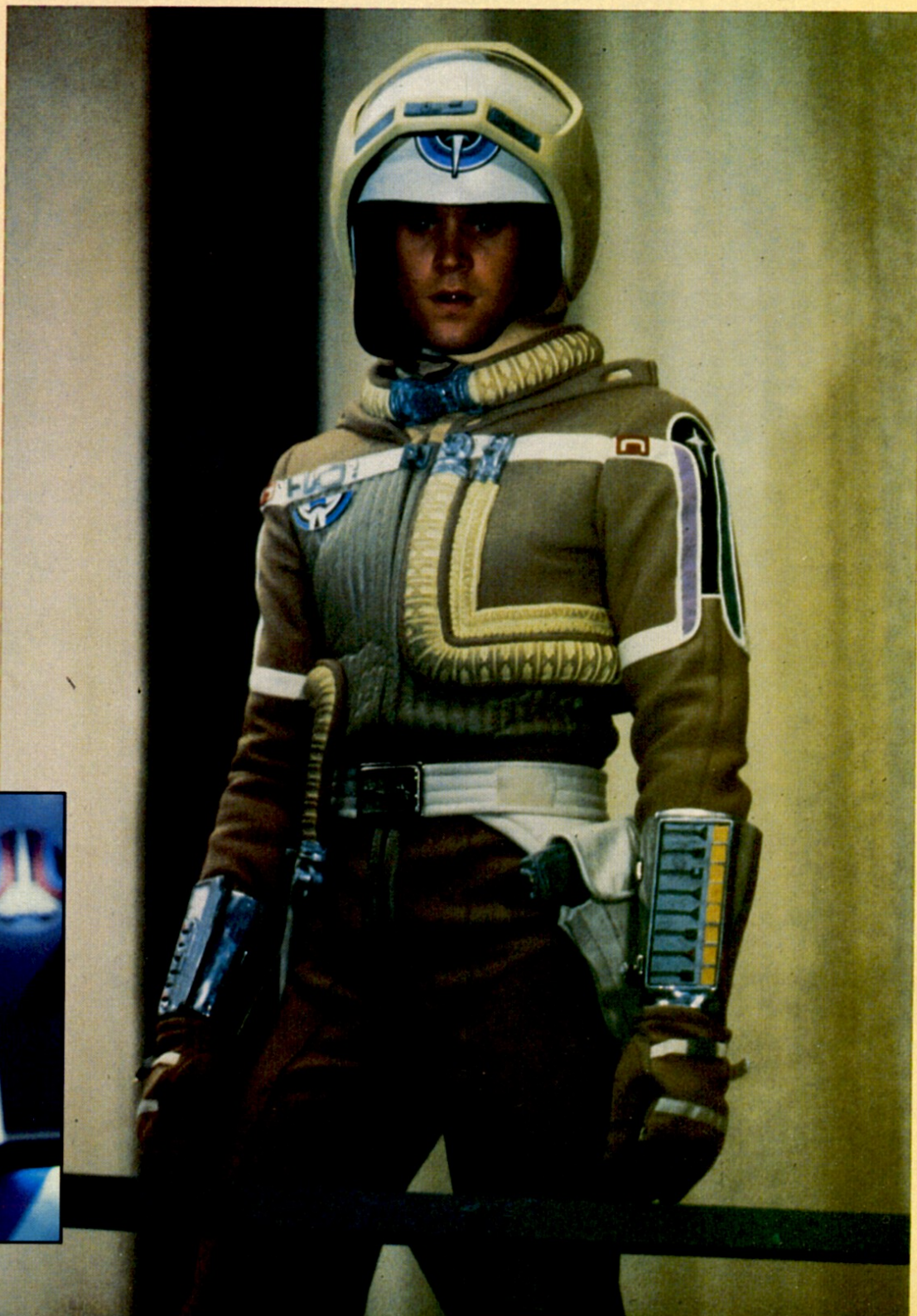
by David J. Hogan

The most ambitious computer simulation ever attempted will highlight THE LAST STARFIGHTER, Lorimar's \$13 million science fiction adventure, tentatively scheduled for a June 22 release by Universal.

Director Nick Castle Jr., working from a script by Jonathan Betuel, has guided a cast which includes Robert Preston, Lance Guest, Dan O'Herlihy and Catherine Mary Stewart. A 40-day shooting schedule began June 8 with exteriors shot at a trailer park in Soledad Canyon, California, and filming at MGM studios.

Lance Guest plays Alex, a resourceful 18 year-old whose chance encounter with an extraterrestrial video game whisks him into outer space, where the Star League of Planets is threatened by the evil KO-Dan race. His skill with the game—which is actually a testing device—qualifies him to become a Starfighter. While Alex fights hair-raising battles in the dark corners of the galaxy, his klutzy double, delivered as a courtesy by the Star League, replaces him at home.

Right: Lance Guest as Alex, video-gamer-cum-starfighter. **Inset:** Robert Preston as Centauri, a roguish talent scout for the Star League of Planets.





Centauri (Robert Preston) introduces new recruit Alex (Lance Guest) to Grig (Dan O'Herlihy), his lizard-like navigator.

Robert Preston plays Centauri, Alex's roguish mentor whom Castle describes as "Harold Hill in space," referring to Preston's famed Broadway and film roles as *THE MUSIC MAN*. The imposing Dan O'Herlihy is Grig, Alex's lizard-like navigator. And Catherine Mary Stewart plays Maggie, Alex's puzzled girlfriend.

THE LAST STARFIGHTER will be highlighted by 27 minutes of computer simulation—the bulk of it employed to depict alien worlds, spacecrafts and battles. A \$3 million effects contract was awarded to Digital Productions, a California-based computer graphics house headed by John Whitney, Jr. The pride of Digital is its Cray Super Computer, a one-of-a-kind

giant whose imaging capabilities will, according to Castle, "fool you into thinking that the spaceships, planets and terrain you're looking at are real."

Castle dismisses any comparison of *THE LAST STARFIGHTER* to *TRON*, Disney's computer-generated adventure that did not do well at the boxoffice in 1982. "TRON is what I'd call a low-res (resolution) film," said Castle. "The colors were purposefully flat and artificial, almost a cartoon look. That was appropriate since *TRON*'s action takes place inside a video game.

"As far as *THE LAST STARFIGHTER*, there's been a conscious effort not to draw a lot of advance attention to Digital or to

the presence of computer simulation, mainly because we've gone for simulation that gives a photo-real look," continued Castle. "What we expect to happen is that the film community will see that computers can now match motion control graphics in terms of special effects. For instance, we can do multiple elements in a single pass, or start from five miles out and zoom right in on something. The technique could revolutionize the special effects industry."

Digital's computers build images with polygons that are molded and shaped into the desired form. One major element of *THE LAST STARFIGHTER*, the Gun Star, will be constructed from 400,000 polygons. "Some full battle scenes will use more than a million polygons," said Castle.

This sort of technical ambition has been a challenge for Castle, an amiable man in his mid-30s whose only other directorial credit is T.A.G. (initials for The Assassination Game), a low-budget comedy-thriller that received limited distribution but some warm notices in 1982.

Castle wrote for television in the early '70s and assisted in the shooting of John Carpenter's *DARK STAR* (Castle and Carpenter were classmates at USC film school). In 1978, Castle played The Shape in *HALLOWEEN*, and later wrote film scripts, including *SKATE-TOWN U.S.A.* and *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* (co-written with Carpenter).

Castle is the son of the late Nick Castle, a famed Hollywood choreographer who spent many produc-

tive years at MGM and Paramount. The director credits his early exposure to musical comedy as a major contributing factor to the tone of *THE LAST STARFIGHTER*.

"We've played the picture on that sort of broad level," he said. "It's got a 'little film' quality to it. We've put in a lot of warmth and humor. John [Betuel] and I had time to refine the script before shooting began, to make it fun and unpretentious."

Castle is quick to credit Ron Cobb, in charge of the film's "visual concepts," with many of the film's hoped-for strengths. A highly skilled designer and illustrator who has contributed striking visual ideas to *STAR WARS*, *ALIEN* and *CONAN*, Cobb has been involved in nearly all of the design aspects of *THE LAST STARFIGHTER*—from aliens to spaceships to costumes.

"Ron is the person who coordinated everything," asserted Castle. "If anyone can be credited with having as much 'vision' on the picture as the director, it's Ron Cobb. The picture just oozes design. What you'd love to do with Ron is give him hundreds of millions of dollars and just say, 'Go!'"

Castle made sure that Cobb—who earned his union card on the picture—remained an active force in postproduction. "His presence was absolutely necessary," Castle said.

Principal photography was expedited by detailed storyboards prepared by Digital Productions' Carl Aldana. The boards were designed to aid Castle as he blocked out the action in scenes that would require the addition of special effects in postproduction.

"Forty days is a real lean schedule for a picture with this sort of effects work," said Castle. "So the storyboards were a big help. I always knew pretty much what was called for."

Castle is excited about *THE LAST STARFIGHTER* as both entertainment and as an ambitious piece of technology. "The computer can do things that couldn't be done without the expenditure of an enormous amount of money," he said. "On the other hand, you have limitations of time and the state of the art. Digital is pioneering this, and, as John Whitney told me, sometimes the pioneers are the ones with the arrows in their backs.

"Technology aside, I wanted to base the picture in reality and prevent it from becoming a cartoon," Castle continued. "It's fairly sophisticated. The adventure doesn't rely only on this boy going into space. I hope that people will say the film is charming as well as adventurous." □

Robert Preston is escorted aboard the Gun Star, a space battlecruiser. Production designer Ron Cobb defined the look of the film's costumes, which were designed by Robert Fletcher.

Alex and Grig appear before a Star League assembly, a crowd scene of alien makeups designed by Ron Cobb and executed by makeup expert Terry Smith.





2084

Futuristic film from the Oscar-winning art director of *STAR WARS*.

By Alan Jones

After suffering some setbacks on *THE SENDER* (13:2 13:3:8), the stylish horror film he directed for Paramount, Roger Christian has decided to take the independent route with his new film, 2084. Christian is the Oscar-winning art director of *STAR WARS* and has also been nominated for his work on *ALIEN*. 2084 will be his second feature film project as director.

The film, which Christian wrote with Matthew Jacobs, could be called an unofficial update of George Orwell's frightening *1984*. The film, however, will not be a downbeat "message" picture, but an action-packed adventure. Jacobs' tag-line in the script reads: "A hundred years in the future, two things will be the same: people will still fight for freedom and people will still lust for power."

2084 is set on a desert planet, named Ordessa, at a time when Earth has run out of fuel. After discovering that valuable energy resources exist on Ordessa, Jovitt, an evil mercenary, and his policedroids overtake the planet, imposing an oppressive police state.

Caught up in the turbulence are Lorca, the film's hero, and his robot sidekick, Kid, who steal a spacecraft to battle the oppressors. On board the Starship, the protagonists run into another danger: a deadly robot that looks exactly like Kid.

Location work for the film was originally set for Sweden until a visit to Australia unearthed an unusual prop that would save time and money—both key limitations on the production.

"There cocooned in a harbour was a battleship that is just perfect for all the scenes that take place on the Starship shuttlecraft," said Christian. The battleship provides a realistic set-



Roger Christian employs Japanese Kabuki in the design of Kid, a robot.

ting for the film that is both cheap and effective.

"I'm attempting what Jean Luc-Godard did with *ALPHAVILLE* and Bertrand Tavernier did with *DEATH-WATCH*: making realistic settings look alien and unsettling," said Christian. "All these possibilities are there for 2084, which is why we will be able to make it look like \$10 million for a fraction of the cost. I want to take this sort of risk, which you can't do within the studio system."

Christian likes to describe 2084 as a disguised western, and he will be ably supported in this venture by producer Michael Guest whose extensive credits include *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE*, *THE DAY OF THE JACKAL*, and *MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR*.

"Michael [Guest] has experience with both high and low budget films and that was exactly what I needed—someone who could participate and

not just sit around smoking cigars," Christian said. "He knows where to put the production values, and where they count the most."

Every aspect of 2084 will be designed and storyboarded by Christian well before the crew goes to Australia—mainly because he can't afford to do it any other way. Preproduction artwork for the project was drawn by Tony Roberts, who Christian met while trying to set up an ill-fated science fiction movie called *QUEST*. Roberts helped Christian come up with a kabuki samurai look for the characters.

2084 is being financed by the Swedish-based video company VTC and from successful pre-selling at the last Italian MIFED film market. If, as is hoped, the British Post Office pension fund, United Media, enters into the package, too, 2084 will go before the cameras in 1984 on location in Australia as a totally British production.

Christian tried to keep costs down from the beginning. "I know how to cut corners," said the director. "Working on *STAR WARS* and *ALIEN* gave me a lot of experience to draw from, and as a result, I know how to do things quickly and economically. The second unit work I did on *RETURN OF THE JEDI* also helped me: I could see the straightforward way George Lucas operated. All these films have been a huge melting pot of ideas to store away for future reference."

2084 is a big gamble for Christian, but one that has to pay off. Christian turned down an offer to helm the second unit work on Ridley Scott's new film *LEGEND* in order to continue planning his science fiction adventure.

"Buyers have responded to 2084 very well," he said. "I would love to work with Ridley [Scott] again, but I want to do 2084 more." □

SHORT TAKES

CAT'S EYE is an original script by Stephen King to be directed by Lewis (CUJO) Teague. Shooting begins March 1 in Wilmington, North Carolina at a newly built studio complex owned by producer Dino De Laurentiis... Tobe Hooper bowed-out of directing **RETURN OF THE DEAD**, the maverick sequel to George Romero's **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**, and was replaced by Dan O'Bannon, who wrote the script and makes his directing debut on the project. Orion Pictures plans to release the film this summer.

Meanwhile, Hooper began directing **SPACE VAMPIRES** on February 6 in London for Cannon Films, also from an O'Bannon script, co-authored by Don Jakoby. John Dykstra supplies the special effects... **WINTER'S TALE** is a fantasy set in Victorian England, scripted by Melissa (E.T.) Mathison. Shooting is set to begin in England next December on the \$25 million project, produced by Gene Kirkwood for Universal Pictures. Film is based on Mark Helprin's novel about a flying horse... Tom Savini is back supplying the gore effects for **FRIDAY THE 13TH—THE FINAL CHAPTER**, the fourth installment of the popular gross-out series, which Paramount will release April 13... **TENEBRAE** (13:6 14:1:20), the latest film from Italy's horror auteur Dario Argento, has been picked-up for U.S. distribution by Bedford Entertainment, partnered with the Film Gallery. Release is slated for mid-March... Meanwhile, a spokesman for Laurel Entertainment denies the rumor that Argento will coproduce **DAY OF THE DEAD** (14:2:14), the wrap-up to director George Romero's "Living Dead" trilogy.

HOWLING II is not a sequel to **THE HOWLING**. You figure it out. Fritz Kiersch, fresh off of **CHILDREN OF THE CORN**, directs for Hemdale, the bankroller of **RETURN OF THE DEAD**, and a company that appears to be specializing in ersatz follow-ups... Another werewolf story, **THE COMPANY OF WOLVES**, began shooting in January at England's Shepperton Studios. Transformation effects makeup is by Christopher (THE ELEPHANT MAN) Tucker... Brian De Palma returns to the genre with **BODY DOUBLE**, an erotic shocker for Columbia Pictures, co-written with Robert J. Avrech, a former editor of *Millimeter* magazine.

The shuttlecraft lifts off the surface of Ordessa in preproduction artwork by Tony Roberts. Locations have since been changed from snowy Sweden to arid Australia.



BUG JACK BARRON

Director Costa-Gavras abandons story's science fiction underpinnings, fires Harlan Ellison.

By Michael Mayo

Want to BUG JACK BARRON's writer Norman Spinrad or screenwriter Harlan Ellison? Just ask them what is going on with the Universal adaptation of Spinrad's controversial novel. After more than a year at the studio, the project has done a complete turn about face, with Ellison being dismissed as screenwriter.

This fifth effort to film Spinrad's novel looked like the real thing: famed director Constantin Costa-Gavras (*MISSING*, *Z*), noted *MISSING* producer Edward Lewis, and award-winning science fiction author Harlan Ellison as screenwriter were all set to collaborate, with the project tentatively to begin filming in the summer of '83. [see 13:2:4]

That start date was postponed, and Ellison learned December 30 that he had been fired from the scripting chores on BUG JACK BARRON by director Costa-Gavras who, production spokesman Bob Cortez commented tersely, "wanted to go in a different direction from Ellison." Gavras has replaced Ellison with noted mainstream writer Fay Kanin.

When Ellison got the news of his dismissal from producer Edward Lewis, he felt a bitterness not only at the loss of a project he feels strongly about, but also because of what Ellison feels is a continuing failure of the entertainment industry to deal with science fiction on its own terms.

"What Eddie Lewis told me is that Costa-Gavras called him and decided that BUG JACK BARRON, which is one of the classic science fiction novels, should not be a science fiction novel," said Ellison, fuming. "Instead it should be contemporary and more 'relevant.'" Costa-Gavras reportedly told Lewis that he did not want Ellison to continue to work on the script because Ellison is a "science fiction writer."

But BUG JACK BARRON appeared to be in trouble long before Ellison's dismissal. Universal presi-

Harlan Ellison



PHOTO/JACK WALLNER

dent Ned Tannan, the man who approved the project, was fired over the poor showing of Universal's films last summer. Costa-Gavras' star has also lost some of its shine; his latest film, *HANNA K*, flopped at the boxoffice and was destroyed by New York critics.

The pressure is on the new Universal management to produce a blockbuster hit, and a big-budget, politically-oriented science fiction film may not be a project they consider worth the risk—perhaps signaling Costa-Gavras' move to lobotomize the book's science fiction context.

According to insiders, Ellison's script was supposedly extremely visual (read expensive) and highly political (read boxoffice poison). Both Ellison and Spinrad had been fighting to preserve the emotional and political messages of the novel, but according to Spinrad, studios today only want to see "politics" in the form of warm, winning nostalgia, *a la* Lawrence Kasdan's *THE BIG CHILL*.

Spinrad, however, is used to such complications and frustrations—*Bug Jack Barron*, the novel, also almost never saw the light of day. Spinrad's science-fiction opus was first commissioned in 1967 by Doubleday editor Larry Ashmead, who told the author that he could write whatever he wanted.

What Spinrad came up with, however, was a scatological, disturbing story about a famous, messiah-like talk show host who uses his newfound political clout to attack powerful institutions. Bursting with raw sex, rough language and dark cynicism, Spinrad's novel was a bit different than the average science-fiction yarn of the day.

Doubleday didn't like what it read, and "advised" the author to take out the "objectionable" parts. But that would have left a very short story, and the author declined. It took another two years, but the novel, which became a cornerstone to the "New Wave" of challenging, adult-oriented S-F literature, finally appeared under the Walker imprint, with a simultaneous paperback edition from Berkeley Jove.

After the novel's success, three movie producers came calling, but all failed in getting the project off the ground. Spinrad, who then wrote his own script, also was unsuccessful in filming the novel.

However, Spinrad was pleased when Universal, Costa-Gavras, Lewis, and Ellison, who is coincidentally a close friend of the author, entered the picture. "My book is in the best of hands," he said at the time. "I had no desire to write this one more time."

The first sign that all was not well with Ellison's script was a recent *New York Times* report that *WAR DAY*, a post-Armageddon film written by

Whitley Strieber, would be Costa-Gavras' and Lewis' next project, with no mention of BUG JACK BARRON. Lewis dismissed the article as hype.

Prior to his dismissal from the film, Ellison heard nothing from Costa-Gavras about his script. He feels the director has acted unconscionably. "It's not the money that bothers me," said Ellison. "I got paid handsomely for my work. But money is not why I write."

"I was told that Costa-Gavras felt very enthusiastic about the script," continued Ellison. "I was told that he thought it needed some work, but it was basically what he wanted to do. I felt good about that, but I didn't hear from him until he was finished with *HANNA K*. He got in touch with me then, saying he'd heard I was upset because I hadn't heard from him. I wasn't upset, but I was confused why there had been no word. He said he'd written me a long letter in July, but that his secretary must not have mailed it. He said he'd send me another copy. Well, it's January, and I still haven't seen the letter."

Ellison completed work on the script in February 1983, and furnished Costa-Gavras with pages as it was being written. "I met Costa-Gavras twice for a total of about 15 minutes," said Ellison. "At no time did Costa-Gavras say what he wanted this movie to do or be about. I presume he wanted the book, since that's what he bought. All he ever said about it was that he didn't want the characters to have a '60s radical background because he thought it would be dated. I thought he was right, so I conceived a different background for them. Otherwise, he gave specific instructions that I was to be left alone and not to be interfered with. I don't see how the hell he can complain that my script is 'not the vision' he had. He never said anything about what he wanted."

Ellison has not had good luck lately with his big-budget screenplays. A projected movie of Isaac Asimov's famous *I, ROBOT*, to be produced by Lewis and directed by Irvin Kershner (*THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*), also fell through. And Ellison's announced telefilm/novelization of his expanded "A



Boy and His Dog" novella, *BLOOD'S A ROVER*, was cancelled by Universal and the novelization withdrawn by Ellison, after advertisements with the cover art had already been placed in trade publications.

During all of this, Ellison found his name in the papers. A conversation he had with a New York journalist—which Ellison claims was off-the-record—resulted in a New York newspaper story stating that Robert Redford, apparently very interested in BUG JACK BARRON and its politics, had reportedly bribed someone to secure a copy of the script.

Universal was furious about the leak, apparently afraid that any publicity about the touchy project might jinx any deals in the works. Producer Lewis made his displeasure known to the normally loquacious Ellison, who for awhile answered questions about the film with a curt, "No comment."

Ellison is no longer reticent on the subject. "If Norman Spinrad will give me his approval, I will publish the film script someday," he said. "Whether the film will ever be made, I don't know. I suspect not, because Costa-Gavras' ideas are so wonky that if the film is ever made, it won't be the BUG JACK BARRON we know." □

FIRE-STARTER

E.T.'s Drew Barrymore gets scary as the title character in Stephen King's best-seller.

by David J. Hogan

Put on your asbestos long johns and get ready for FIRESTARTER, a \$15 million adaptation of Stephen King's bestselling novel, set for a May 11 release by Universal.

Mark L. Lester has directed the film for executive producer Dino DeLaurentiis and producer Frank Capra Jr. The screenplay—which King is reportedly very pleased with, saying it's the best adaptation yet—has been written by Stanley Mann (THE COLLECTOR, EYE OF THE NEEDLE, METEOR).

The stellar cast includes George C. Scott, Martin Sheen, David Keith, Art Carney, Louise Fletcher, Freddie Jones, Moses Gunn, Heather Locklear and 8-year-old Drew Barrymore (the little sister in E.T.) as Charlene "Charlie" McGee, the innocent little girl whose violent pyrotechnic ability makes her the object of pursuit and exploitation by a ruthlessness agency of the United States Government, the DSI, the Department of Scientific Intelligence.

The child's talent has been inherited from her parents (Keith and Locklear) as a result of their participation in a government-sponsored drug experiment while in college. When the clandestine agency decides to cover its tracks, Charlie's mother is murdered. The girl and her father—who can force his will on others at the cost of terrible headaches and damage to his brain—must flee.

Charlie and her father find refuge at the farm of Irv and Norma Manders (Carney and Fletcher) during their flight from agents of the DSI. After being captured, Charlie is duped by an ominous government assassin named Rainbird (Scott), who pretends to be her friend. But then Charlie is reunited with her father and learns the truth...



Drew Barrymore

FIRESTARTER was originally planned at Universal Pictures for director John Carpenter, who was working from a script by Bill Phillips. When Carpenter's special-effects laden version of THE THING flopped at the boxoffice, Universal became apprehensive about the enormous budget that was projected for Carpenter's FIRESTARTER. Universal put the project on hold, and Phillips' script was discarded. Carpenter went on to adapt another Stephen King novel, Christine, and used Phillips as screenwriter.

FIRESTARTER was revived when a new script by Stanley Mann was judged by the studio as being more manageable, financially speaking. Executive producer DeLaurentiis, impressed with CLASS OF 1984, approached Mark Lester about directing, and the film was ready to roll.

FIRESTARTER now joins CUJO, THE DEAD ZONE, CHRISTINE and CHILDREN OF THE CORN (to be released in March by New World Pictures), as the latest (and most ambitious) of five Stephen King adaptations to see release within a year of each

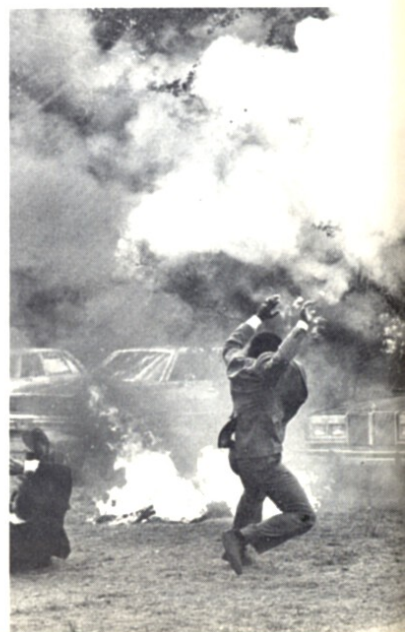
other. Except for scheduling conflicts that caused actor Burt Lancaster to be replaced by Martin Sheen, the rebirth has gone smoothly. (Sheen plays a shrewd D.S.I. administrator who refuses to be outwitted by the fugitive 8-year-old.)

A 67-day shooting schedule took cast and crew to Wilmington, North Carolina during September through November. Primary shooting took place on the streets of Wilmington and at the Orton Plantation, a privately-owned enclave whose centerpiece is a gracious mansion. Although the house was off-limits to the company, a full-size, three-sided replica was built elsewhere on the grounds, as was a full-size barn. Six acres of timber had to be cleared and landscaped in order to create a setting for the facade.

The focus of FIRESTARTER's allure will be a plethora of ambitious fire effects and stunts, masterminded by pyrotechnicians Mike Wood and Steve Jarvis and stunt coordinator Glenn Randall. "What is unusual about the stunts in this film is that they are tremendously large in scope," explained Randall. "Everything happens to groups of people, and all at once!"

Two local fire departments were involved in the shooting as advisors, and representatives were on the set at all times. In addition, every member of the effects crew was trained in firefighting techniques.

"Protection of the actors and stunt people was always our primary consideration," asserted Wood, whose effects credits include TWILIGHT ZONE—THE MOVIE, AMITYVILLE 3-D and POLTERGEIST. "We devised our safeguards first, then worked backwards to refine the effect. Fire can be tricky. We didn't want anyone hurt."





Top: George C. Scott as Rainbird, an ominous government assassin who takes charge of Charlie (Drew Barrymore), the firestarter, after she is captured by fire-suited government agents. **Bottom Left:** When surrounded and threatened with capture, Charlie demonstrates the extent of her powers. **Bottom Right:** Agents burst into flames as they try to restrain Charlie's father, played by David Keith. **FIRESTARTER** began filming September 12, on location in North Carolina, for release by Universal in May.



During tests by the DSI (Department of Scientific Intelligence), Charlie (Drew Barrymore) is told to focus her energy on a cinderblock wall. Slabs of ice and massive refrigeration units standby as safety measures as she learns to control her power.

This special attention to safety—manifested in omnipresent fire extinguishers and ample rehearsal time—paid off: there was not a single mishap or injury during filming. Quite an accomplishment, since audiences next summer will see trucks and other vehicles blown into the air amidst huge gouts of fire, human beings knocked off their feet by huge firefalls, traveling trenches of fire that pursue the hapless villains and the wholesale destruction of the D.S.I.'s labyrinthine headquarters.

Involvement of the principal actors in the fire effects was purposefully limited and carefully controlled. But some key scenes, involving close-ups, called for the stars' active participation. For these sequences, clever camera angles were employed to make the actors appear to be in more peril than they were. Also, flames in some scenes (notably shots of blazing buildings) were controlled by hidden gas jets.

If the safety of the adults in cast and crew was important, then the well-being of young Drew Barrymore was absolutely critical. The spectre of the TWILIGHT ZONE accident that took the lives of actor Vic Morrow and two children in 1982 is so obvious that director Lester did not hesitate to mention it himself.

"Of course we've been very safety-conscious since THE TWI-

LIGHT ZONE tragedy," Lester said. "And I'm not going to deny that what we've been doing on FIRESTARTER is potentially dangerous. But we've been careful and very fortunate. Drew has been wonderful about everything we've asked her to do. Some of the scenes are very difficult and required precise timing. In one scene, Drew has to walk through a barn as [controlled] fire blazes all around her. She did it perfectly."

Barrymore's ability to handle herself with confidence was essen-

tial since she was called upon to work all but two days of the film's 67-day schedule.

Makeup effects for the film are being handled by Jose Sanchez, a Spaniard who has worked steadily in Europe and Hollywood since entering the field in 1957. Sanchez' speciality is historical films—his credits include CROMWELL, PATTON and THE WIND AND THE LION—but a special flair for the fantastic was exhibited by the makeup artist in his work for THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD

Threatened with capture, Charlie blasts two fire-suited agents of the DSI through a barn door, an example of the film's dangerous and complex special effects.



and CONAN, THE BARBARIAN. However, FIRESTARTER is his first experience with an out-and-out horror thriller.

"Fear of fire is built into an audience," he said. "So I've had plenty to take advantage of. FIRESTARTER has been challenging, but I feel that nothing is impossible. I am very excited about some of my effects."

Sanchez's main tasks have been the more gruesome exhibitions of Charlie's power: hair that suddenly bursts into flames, bleeding orifices, and head and hands that melt to the bone. One notable effect that is not fire-related involves a young drug victim who pulls his eyes from his head. The effects will be accomplished with a variety of techniques including prosthetics, explosive squibs, radio and cable-controlled mechanical heads and full-size, rod-controlled puppets.

"We used a little of every technique that is now popular in the field," said Sanchez. "Mark [Lester] knows exactly what he wants. But he lets me use my imagination and make suggestions. I think these effects will look a little different from what people have seen before. I like to be responsible for the full look of a character—from hair styling to cosmetics to special effects makeup. I was able to do that on this film."

For Mark Lester, FIRESTARTER is the sort of career break that other young directors dream of... and the sort of pressure situation that might give other young directors nightmares. Lester's best-known credits include 1979's ROLLER BOOGIE and last year's CLASS OF 1984, a stylish low-budgeter that earned some praise from a few mainstream critics. But FIRESTARTER is Lester's step up to the big leagues. As it goes, so may go Lester's career.

"Sure, I'm feeling pressure," he said. "We're on a tight schedule and the film is expensive. But after ten weeks, we're not a day behind."

Lester entered filmmaking with work on documentaries, including TWILIGHT OF THE MAYAS, which won the award for Best Documentary at the Venice Film Festival in 1971. He made TRICIA'S WEDDING the following year, and then turned to work on low-budget action pictures, including BOBBY JO AND THE OUTLAW and STUNTS.

"You know, on a set there's no difference between a \$1 million film or a \$5 million film or one that costs \$15 million," said Lester. "I just filmed the script shot for shot. It's a pressure situation, but I think I've stayed pretty cool." □

DREW BARRYMORE plays Charlie McGee, the firestarter, a role far different from the sweet little girl she played in E.T. For the demanding part, Barrymore worked 65 days out of the film's 67-day shooting schedule.



20,000 Leagues UNDER THE Sea

He wrote about the potential of electricity at a time when city streets were still being illuminated by gaslight.

He forecast the invention of airplanes, helicopters, motion pictures, television, computers, man-made satellites and guided missiles in an era where crude steam engines were the technological state-of-the-art.

His *voyages extraordinaires* placed the literary genre of science fiction on a sound basis and stimulated the development of 20th Century technology.

His name was Jules Verne, and he is regarded by many as the Father of Modern Science Fiction.

A daringly original novelist, a complex, imaginative thinker, Verne created fascinating worlds and grand adventures—stories bursting with energy, action *and* intelligence. Because his fiction is so vivid, so full of exoticism and excitement, Hollywood has had a field day adapting his works into big, bold extravaganzas.

Many of the films based on Verne's works have been successful: **AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS**, **JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH** and **MYSTERIOUS ISLAND**, to name a few.

But there is little doubt, to cineastes and Verne fans alike, that the 1954 Walt Disney production of **20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA** towers above them all.



THE FILMING OF JULES VERNE'S CLASSIC SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

Retrospect by Joel Frazier & Harry Hathorne



Above: Walt Disney's production filmed Verne's Nautilus using an intricately detailed 11-foot model in a massive tank built on Stage 3 at Disney's Burbank studios.
Far Left: A close-up of the Nautilus model.
Middle: Director Richard Fleischer (left, front), Robert Wilke, James Mason and Paul Lukas (back to camera) during a break in filming.
Left: Kirk Douglas as harpooner Ned Land confronts the Nautilus in a rear-projected shot cut from the film.

A grand, cinematic masterpiece, a dazzling, full-bodied epic, 20,000 LEAGUES is considered one of the most imaginative and innovative science fiction films of all time. And while the film sports daring and complex special effects sequences, its greatest appeal lies in its straightforward, unpretentious style; it's a simple story well told.

The plotline of 20,000 LEAGUES can be summarized in a nutshell: a mysterious and seemingly misfit inventor, Captain Nemo, who has severed all ties with the civilized world, roams the awesome world beneath the sea in his futuristic, high-tech submarine (the *Nautilus*), with an equally mysterious crew. Driven by a fierce, implacable hatred of society, he uses his invention as a weapon against warships of an unnamed, oppressive nation that has taken everything away from him, including his country and his family.

Also on board are three castaways (Professor Aronnax, Ned Land and Conseil) who have been taken prisoners by the submariners. Confined aboard the *Nautilus* as it travels around the world, they are torn between the urge to escape and the desire to stay aboard and experience the wonders of the deep.

In the early 1950s, Walt Disney was involved in a number of projects, including a series of "true life adventure" nature films, various animated shorts and features, and several live-action costume dramas made in England. But his most important act during this period was his decision to build Disneyland.

Kirk Douglas, as harpooner Ned Land, gets keel-hauled by Nemo for mutiny.

Douglas clings to a mock-up of the dorsal fin of the *Nautilus* in a dump tank at Disney Studios. The background of open sea is rear-projected footage.



Captain Nemo (James Mason) shows Professor Aronnax (Paul Lukas) the wonders of the deep, as they stand before the portal in Nemo's salon, a scene shot at Disney studios (right). Director of photography Franz Planer had extreme difficulty lighting the interior sets of the *Nautilus* because of their cramped space. The grip sitting on the ladder at left passes the branch of coral in front of the lights to cast a shadow on the actors to correspond with the action in a point-of-view shot of what they see.

The idea of a family park had been growing in Disney's imagination since the early '30s, but the heavy investments he had made in his studio and its major productions, plus the intervention of World War II, prevented him from developing the concept. Then, in 1952, he formed what would become WED Enterprises, Inc. (an acronym for Walter Elias Disney) for the purpose of turning his dream into a physical reality. Key members of his animation staff, along with talents from the live-action studios, were recruited to design and plan the park. Among the latter group was designer Harper Goff, who was to conceive the imaginative sets for 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA.

Goff entered the film industry in the early '30s as a sketch artist for Warner Bros and worked on such classics as *CAPTAIN BLOOD*, *THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD*, *THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE*, *THE SEA HAWK*, *CASABLANCA* and *THE FIGHTING 69TH*. While working on Disney's theme park in 1952, Goff was also given film assignments to do. Disney asked Goff to visit the marine lab at the California Institute of Technology and see a film made by Dr. McGinnity, the Institute's director.

"Walt wanted me to see if it could fit into an undersea film for the 'true-life adventure' series," explained Goff. "McGinnity had shot some remarkable footage of marine life in a tank—minute fish

and silk-like nudibranch appeared to move in a vacuum because the water was so pure. I thought this film could be fixed to music—a sort of underwater ballet.

"While developing a storyboard for the McGinnity feature, I day-dreamed about the silent film version of Verne's 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA," continued Goff. "I visualized a sequence for the film in which two divers go down to the ocean floor and explore the wonders of the deep. I went ahead and made a series of sketches for that section of the film."

When Disney found out that Goff's sketches were based on 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, he told the artist that he wanted to make a new film version,

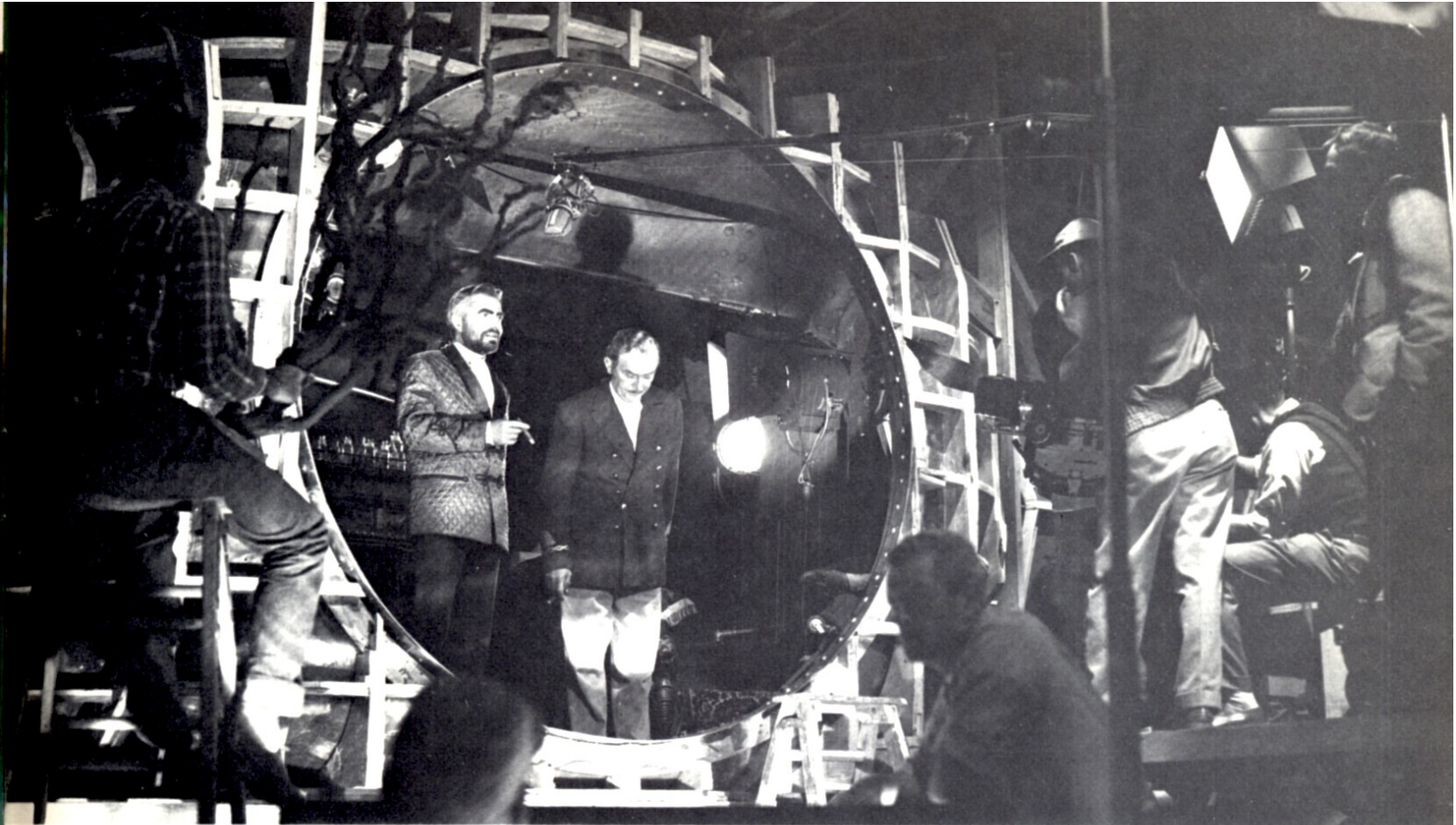
but MGM owned the rights. However, after some investigating, Disney learned that MGM sold the rights to the King Brothers, who sold it to a small company that failed to do anything with it. Impressed by Goff's storyboards and wanting to take on the challenge, Disney decided to buy the rights.

During the late summer of 1952, preparation got underway for a full-length animated version of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA. Goff was placed in charge of project development, and his first task was to design Verne's fantastic submarine, the *Nautilus*.

Goff believed that Verne's story, without the mechanical marvels of the submarine, would have been simply another standard adventure

Production designer Harper Goff poses 30 years later with a replica of the prototype model of the *Nautilus* he constructed over a Labor Day weekend in 1952.





tales. Although the story is set in the mid-19th Century, the *Nautilus*—the movie's super-powerful underwater vessel headed by Captain Nemo—is capable of acts that are even impossible for a modern submarine, like ramming ships at tremendous speeds without suffering irreparable damage to its hull. In other words, Goff's *Nautilus* has to be extremely unconventional in terms of design and operation.

Goff's first challenge was to create a submarine that had the outward appearance of a sea monster. "The book said that the *Nautilus* was mistaken by observers to be a terrifying sea creature," Goff said. "I always thought that the shark and alligator were quite deadly-looking in the water, so I based my design on their physical characteristics. The submarine's streamlined body, dorsal fin and prominent tail simulated the traits of the shark. The heavy rivet patterns on the surface plates represented the rough skin on the alligator, while the forward viewports and top searchlights represented its menacing eyes.

"Verne's *Nautilus* could go through the hull of an enemy ship like a needle through cloth," continued Goff. "I designed four saw-toothed ridges that started at the prow and ran along the hull to the stern. Besides being capable of cutting through the hull of a ship, these projecting ridges also protected the submarine's viewports, lights, diving planes and helical propeller from the ship's wreckage."

Utilizing these ideas, Goff built the first prototype model over the Labor Day weekend, and presented the 18-inch model to Disney, who was less than pleased with the design.

"Walt thought it was too cluttered," remembered Goff. "He showed me an aluminum cigar capsule and said, 'That's what I think the *Nautilus* should look like.' He wanted a sleek, cylindrical craft with a bullet nose. Even though Verne's submarine in the story was similar to this, I felt that 20,000 LEAGUES would have been the dullest picture in the world if Walt had used it. You look at it once, and you've seen it."

Since Nemo possessed knowledge of advanced technology, Disney thought the *Nautilus* should have a futuristic design, including a smooth-surfaced body. Goff totally disagreed.

"I told Walt that the *Nautilus* was built hastily and roughly at Nemo's secret base," the designer explained. "The only available material was the rough iron that was salvaged from wrecks. Nemo didn't have a big drop-forged to smooth out the iron plates or dies to shape and curve them. At the time our story took place, the iron-riveted ship was considered the finest example of marine construction. I thought Nemo had no choice but to use flat iron plates, heavily riveted by hand, to build his submarine."

The only feature Walt Disney liked about Goff's model was the skiff which fitted into its own berth on the afterdeck. "It was always

locked in place," said Goff. "The crew didn't have to lift it from a cradle or shoot it up from below-decks (as was the case in the book). All they had to do was slide back the protective covers that sealed the inside, climb in and row away. Walt liked that idea, but wouldn't buy anything else."

Despite their differences, Goff managed to convince Disney of his concept and went on to design the submarine's interior structure.

In the late fall of 1952, after months of preliminary work, Disney decided to abandon the animated format and make 20,000 LEAGUES a live-action feature. His British-produced costume dramas, such as TREASURE ISLAND and ROBIN HOOD, performed well at the box office and were less costly and time consuming than the animated features. Modestly budgeted, these films brought in handsome profits and convinced Disney of the important role live-action would play in the financial future of his studio.

In 1953, activity at the studio changed from the quiet of an all-animation studio to the bustle of construction of new shops and sound stage facilities that were needed to accommodate live-action filming. Also built was a special tank stage (now called Stage 3), which was used in the shooting of many of the film's "water effects" sequences, including the dazzling fight with the giant squid and the filming of all the underwater miniatures. This indoor tank, which measured 60 by 125 feet and ranged

Cast & Credits

A Buena Vista release. 12/54. 127 mins. Directed by Richard Fleischer. Produced by Walt Disney. Screenplay by Earl Felton, based on the novel by Jules Verne. Music by Paul Smith. Cinematographer, Franz Planer. Edited by Elmo Williams. Sound director, C. O. Slyfield. Sound recording, Robert O. Cook. Production manager, Fred Leahy. Effects photographer, Ralph Hammas. Second Unit director, James Havens. Underwater photographer, Till Gabbani. Special processes, Ub Iwerks. Technicolor consultant, Morgan Padelford. Assistant directors, Tom Connors Jr., Russ Haverick. Diving master, Fred Zendar. Production developed by Harper Goff. Art director, John Meehan. Set decorator, Emile Kuri. Special effects, John Hench, Josh Meador. Matte artist, Peter Ellenshaw. Sketch artist, Bruce Bushman. Make-up and hairdressing, Lou Hippe. Costumer, Norman Martien. Stunt diver, Norm Bishop. Expert for Bahama locations, Howard Lightbourn. Special mechanical effects, Robert A. Matthey. Sculptor for squid sequence, Chris Mueller. Consultants, Howard and Theodore Lydecker.

Ned Land Kirk Douglas
 Capt. Nemo James Mason
 Prof. Aromax Paul Lukas
 Conseil Peter Lorre
 Mate Robert J. Wilke
 John Howard Carleton Young
 Captain Farragut Ted De Corsia
 Diver Percy Helton
 Mate on Lincoln Ted Cooper
 Shipping agent Edward Marr
 Casey Moore Fred Graham*

The Original Jules Verne Novel

Verne fathered science fiction and "20,000 Leagues" is his masterpiece.

One of the 19th Century's most prolific and talented artists, Jules Verne, wrote about exotic lands and daring, dangerous adventures—all without ever leaving his native country.

Born in Nantes, France in 1828, Verne came from a legal and seafaring family. After studying law in Paris, he turned his attention to literary and theatrical activities, gaining some distinction with comedies and librettos for comic operas. His keen interest in ballooning and in geographic exploration prompted him to write a lengthy treatise on a possible aerial voyage across the then unexplored continent of Africa. The highly technical and academic paper was rejected several times before one publisher, Pierre Jules Hetzel, urged the author to rewrite it as a fanciful tale of adventure.

The result, *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, revealed to Verne the true direction of his talent—the delineation of incredible adventures based so firmly on scientific and geographic fact that they seemed entirely plausible. *Five Weeks in a Balloon* was first published in serial form (as were most of Verne's stories) in Hetzel's periodical for juveniles, *Magazin d'Education*, in 1826.

An immediate success, it was issued in book form the following year, bringing national acclaim to Verne and considerable wealth to Hetzel, who gave the 35-year-old author a lifelong contract. Thereafter, Verne wrote one or two books every year for the next quarter of a century, receiving an annual sum of 20,000 francs for his endeavors.

When the author died at the age of 77 in 1905, Verne had written 63 novels, in addition to scores of short stories, plays and essays. Among his popular works are: *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865), *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1869), and *Around the World in 80 Days* (1872).

In his preparation for *20,000 Leagues*, his greatest work, the author proved himself to be a meticulous researcher. He spent the greater part of 1866 collecting scientific and technical information and interviewing oceanographers, marine biologists, fishermen, sailors—in short, those people who had knowledge of the sea and all its aspects.

His conception of the submarine *Nautilus* (a Latin word, meaning "sailor") was based on the latest technological innovations in

Illustrations from Hetzel's first edition of Verne's book showing the attack of the giant squid (top), the Salon of the Nautilus (middle) and a burial party at sea (bottom).



Jules Verne

marine construction and engineering. In addition to gathering a wealth of both factual and speculative material, the author also made an exhaustive study of the lives of all the inventors who had ever attempted to build a submarine. The basic plans for his fictional submarine were based largely on the work of

these men.

The major sections of *20,000 Leagues* were actually written at sea, aboard Verne's sailing yacht, the *Saint Michel*, through which he acquired firsthand knowledge of the ocean's ever-changing moods. It took the author more than two years to complete his carefully thought-out story.

In January, 1870, *20,000 Leagues* appeared in Paris bookstalls and became an immediate best seller. Several years later, the novel, along with its author, received worldwide recognition when it was translated into a number of different languages, including English.

The chief "character" of Verne's opus, was a remarkable creation. When the novel was published, there was no practical ocean-going submarine; experimental models still lacked a suitable means of propulsion. However, Verne's submersible was equipped with electric propulsion machinery. Unlike its real contemporaries, the *Nautilus* was able to travel at a tremendous speed across all the oceans of the world and could remain underwater for an indefinite period of time. With marvelous vision, Verne foretold such developments as double-hull construction, diving chambers, oxygen tanks, electric measuring devices and air conditioning. Surprisingly, he did not envision torpedoes or the periscope.

Besides showing uncanny brilliance in the technical aspects of his novel, Verne also created some intriguing human characters. No creature of science fiction has been so enigmatic as Verne's central character in *20,000 Leagues*—a misanthrope who simply calls himself Nemo (a Latin word, meaning "without name"). And about no other character have so many questions been asked. Who is Nemo? What is his nationality?

To find the answers one must go back to Verne's original idea for the book, which can be capsulized as follows: a Polish aristocrat, whose country has been invaded by Czarist Russia and whose family has been murdered by the aggressor, flees his native land and creates a world of his own in the depths of the sea. Traveling the seven seas in a submarine craft of his own invention, he sinks Russian warships wherever he finds them.

An advocate of revolutionary principles, Verne was outraged



The cover of Hetzel's first edition.

over Russia's relentless repression of the Poles after their insurrection against Czar Alexander II in 1863. The author passionately believed that all revolutionary actions were moral. He wanted the character of Nemo to be a symbol of revolt against Russian tyranny.

This idea, however, alarmed Hetzel, whose concern was more than valid. France was having good diplomatic relations with Russia and her allies. To reveal Nemo as a Pole fighting the Russians would have caused a strain in international relations.

Verne decided to modify Nemo's character, making him an unidentified figure who fought society as a whole. The submarine, initially a weapon of offense, became a mechanism of defense. Its commander never destroyed ships without justification.

After *20,000 Leagues* appeared in print, Verne received hundreds of letters from their readers who asked that Nemo's background be revealed in a sequel. In 1871, Verne wrote *Mysterious Island*, devoting one chapter to his famous character's origin.

Under pressure from Hetzel, who still thought it wise not to reveal Nemo as a Pole, the author made his character a refugee Indian prince named Dakkar, the son of a rajah. He revealed the enemy to be the British Empire, whose troops had massacred Dakkar's entire family during the colonial wars.

Why the British? Verne and every thinking man in France—all sons of the French revolution—despised England's imperialistic expansion over other races of mankind. At the time, England appeared to be the safest choice to play the "villain."

For his masterpiece, Verne created one of the world's great fictional characters. Nemo is not only a creature of Verne's times but our times as well. He still remains a symbol of individual liberty.



from three to 18 feet in depth, cost Disney \$300,000.

Because Disney did not have a live-action staff, he recruited many of the artists and craftsmen from other studios, mainly Fox, Paramount and RKO. John Meehan was brought in from Paramount as art director.

"The words 'art director' and 'production designer' are union [IATSE—International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees] terms," said Harper Goff. "I was not allowed screen credit for my art direction because I was not a member of the union-affiliated Society of Motion Picture Art Directors. If I had received credit, the union projectionists would have refused to run the picture.

"Disney and other members of the Independent Producers Association were negotiating with the union at the time," continued Goff. "They were trying to stay out of union affiliates and remain independent. When the sets were being constructed, Emile Kuri, our set decorator, told me to get a union card because he believed my art direction would win an Academy Award. I plagued Walt, who seemed to make an effort, but his attorney, Gunther Lessing, advised him to refrain from helping me because he was still trying to come to terms with the union. He'd be contradicting himself. Later, after the picture was completed, I got myself a union card, but I still could not be recognized as the production designer or art director on 20,000 LEAGUES, because I wasn't a union member when I worked on the picture. It was a very traumatic experience, believe me.

"Obviously, it became necessary, in order to continue work on 20,000 LEAGUES to hire a union art director," said Goff. "John Meehan was brought in as the art director of record to carry out my designs and supervise the final drafting and construction of the sets. John followed my drawings exactly. Since I was not involved with the *Abraham Lincoln* [the armed tri-



James Mason and Paul Lukas film the scene where Nemo shows Aronnax the slave labor camp at Rorapandi. The exterior set is built at 20th Century-Fox, on the shores of "Chicago Lake," so called because the town in the background was built for the filming of *IN OLD CHICAGO* in 1938. The scaffolding behind the town supports the sky backing for the Sersen effects tank.

gate assigned to track down and destroy the *Nautilus*] or the San Francisco interiors. John was given responsibility for designing those sets."

However, the *Nautilus* was entirely Goff's design. "The definitive model was made a long time before John came on the picture," he said. "There were a lot of things he wanted to do to the *Nautilus*, but his hands were tied because Walt was satisfied with my designs."

Goff's initial model of the *Nautilus* was different from the one that appears in the picture, though. "For example, each blade on the ram could be removed and replaced when it was damaged, like the

blade on a plowshare," said Goff. "Also, the original model lacked the bubble lights and dorsal fin. The wheelhouse's viewports were supposed to have been the glowing eyes of the monster. After completing the model, I realized that Nemo could not see outside the windows because of the glare produced by the inside lights. So, I tacked on lights above the forward viewports, and I found that these lights, positioned above and behind the menacing saw-toothed ram, gave the *Nautilus* an even deadlier appearance.

"The dorsal fin was added later as an afterthought," continued Goff. "The full-scale afterdeck of the *Nautilus* was attached to an actual submarine for a scene in which Aronnax and his comrades are left on deck while the submarine submerges. The Navy told us that the stunt people had to hang on to a periscope or some other projection while the sub was in operation. I didn't want a periscope because it would have made the *Nautilus* look too modern. So, I decided to add a saw-toothed dorsal fin which, also, would complement the forward ram."

Continuing his design work on the *Nautilus*, Goff moved to its interior, first creating a functional tubular one that was based on one of the world's classic examples of structural engineering, the Forth railway bridge in Scotland. "I always loved the look of this cantilever bridge," Goff said. "It was made of giant tubular columns and

trusses." Although lightweight, the tubular members were rigid enough to withstand heavy wind action.

"When it came time to design the interior framework, I asked myself: what kind of system did Nemo use to pressurize and stabilize the hull?" continued Goff. "I came up with the idea that he built a tubular system to pump both air and water through the boat. The air was stored in the upper tubes in the structural frame while the ballast filled the lower tubes."

As for the submarine's interior chambers, Goff was inspired by the battleship *Oregon*, which was built in the 1890s. "The ship had a nice profile, however, it was below-decks where she was the most impressive," Goff said. "The cabins had been fitted with finely-crafted, built-in beds, lockers and chart tables—all designed to fit neatly and cleanly between the ship's struts and braces. The highly varnished woodwork and polished brass railings conformed with the curves and contours of the ship. I tried to carry this impressive style throughout the interiors of the *Nautilus*.

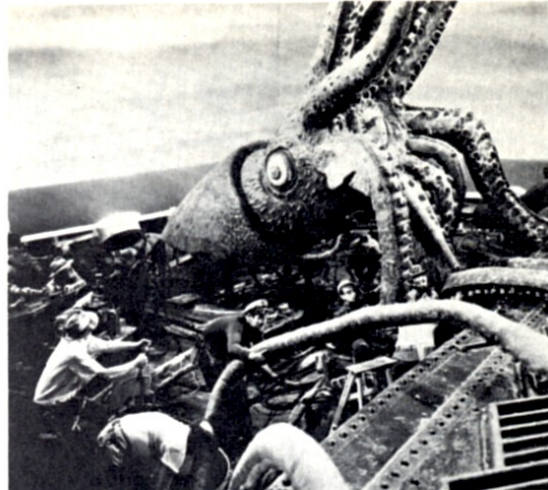
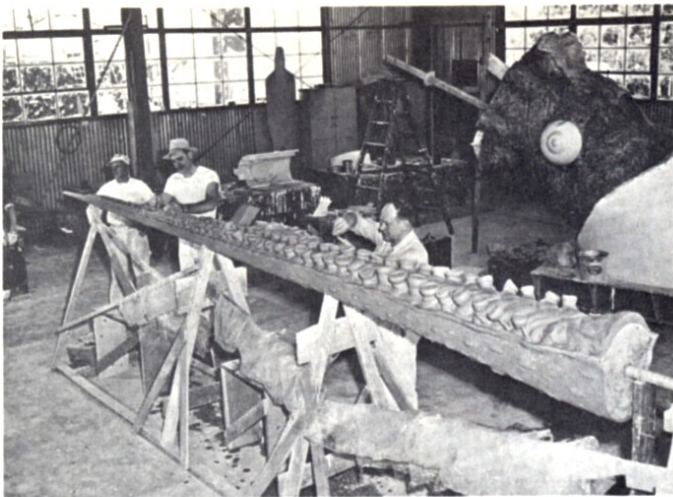
Goff's interiors successfully combined futuristic, piston-driven machinery with 19th-century culture. In Goff's imaginative recreation of Nemo's salon, elegant furnishings blended tastefully with the surrounding tubular iron framework and jewel-like nautical instruments.

"Nothing looks so attractive as a

Walt Disney greets animation pioneer Max Fleischer (center) and son Richard, after Fleischer Jr. had finished directing the filming of 20,000 LEAGUES.



THE GIANT SQUID was sculpted in the Disney prop shop by a team headed by Chris Mueller, shown (left, center) sculpting one of the squid's sessile arms. The partially completed body sits in the background. The squid was rigged with mechanics for filming by an effects team (right) headed by Robert Matthey, and is shown here being set up to film the first, abandoned "pink sky" squid sequence (shown facing page). Lighting for the sequence was too bright and made the wire-work show.



combination of rough iron and elegant luxury," said Goff. "Although the *Nautilus* was a machine of the future, its inventor would have been uncomfortable living in a high-tech, ultra-modern STAR WARS interior.

"Nemo got everything for his submarine—building materials, furniture, objects of art, and even a pipe organ adorned in filigree—from the wrecks he found on the ocean floor," continued Goff. "The excitement of the submarine's functionalism, combined

with Nemo's love to be surrounded by objects of beauty, that's what made the art direction a success."

While Goff was working on his designs, Walt Disney was busy picking a director and writer. After rejecting a few scripts by John Tucker Battle, he finally decided on screenwriter Earl Felton and director Richard Fleischer, who had worked together on some successful B movies at RKO.

A graduate of Brown University

and the Yale School of Drama, Fleischer began his film career with newsreels and short subjects for RKO during the early '40s. Graduating to feature films, he collaborated with writer Earl Felton on several low-budget, but well-made crime melodramas, including *ARMORED CAR ROBBERY* and *THE NARROW MARGIN*. In 1952, Felton and Fleischer teamed again to make *THE HAPPY TIME*, a Disney-like situation comedy about the daily ups and downs of an eccentric family

headed by Charles Boyer. Its excellent script and direction attracted Disney's attention.

"I was chosen to direct 20,000 LEAGUES by a committee at Disney Studios after they had reviewed my earlier films," recalled Fleischer. "At our first meeting, I asked Walt why he had selected me. He answered, 'I saw *HAPPY TIME*, which featured Bobby Driscoll, one of our contract players. If anybody can make an actor out of that kid, he's got to be a good director.'"

Before accepting the assignment, however, Fleischer discussed the offer with his father, animation pioneer Max Fleischer, who had been Disney's rival for many years. "I didn't want my father to feel I was being disloyal," said Fleischer. "If he didn't want me to work for Walt, I wouldn't. His reply was positive, though: 'Oh, God! Yes! Take the job. I think it's wonderful. Tell Walt he's got very good taste.' A couple of years later, when my father visited me in California, Walt honored him with a big luncheon at the studio and a special tour through Disneyland. They became good friends. It was heartwarming to see these two men, who had been bitter enemies for so many years, come together."

Fleischer's first task was to get a workable script, collaborating with scenarist Earl Felton. "While breaking down the novel, Earl and I became acutely aware that there was no real story, only a series of incidents," said Fleischer. "The standard American translation of Verne is a very poor one. The original French work has a real story, but it's lost in translation.

"Our first step was to find out the origin and goals of the principal character, Captain Nemo," continued Fleischer. "We did it like a piece of detective work. There are a few hints scattered around in the novel—for example, there is a portrait of a young woman and a child in Nemo's stateroom. Who are they? And why is Nemo wandering the seas alone? We figured the portrait was that of Nemo's dead wife and child, and then we invented his



Shooting the cannibal attack on the Nautilus, as Captain Nemo repels the natives by electrifying the ship's hull. Filming is taking place in the Sersen Tank on the lot of 20th Century-Fox. The camera on a tripod (lower right) is shooting the action, which is backed-up by a sky backdrop at the other end of the tank (inset). A second effects camera, bolted down, films another angle for use by the Disney animation department to add the electrical effect.



background and why he was on his own."

The screen image of Nemo differs from Verne's original, who was a misguided anarchist who seeks world revolution. He was also contemptuous of society, vowing never again to hold any communication with the civilized world. However, the celluloid Nemo is a militant pacifist, a man who believes in world reformation not revolution. He is willing to share his scientific knowledge with all nations if they will lay down their arms and end aggression. Such pacifism would have infuriated Verne.

The philosophy that is proposed and expounded in the film is very sympathetic to Nemo. "Although Nemo is demonic, he is a force of good fighting the forces of evil," said Fleischer. "He lost his wife and child. He was captured and spent years in a slave camp. He sinks ships that carry munitions and tools of war. He never sinks anything that is innocent."

Though the Disney version of Nemo is a more sympathetic character, he is, ironically, more cold-blooded than the original. He deliberately hunts and destroys warships without remorse; he always takes the offensive. On the other hand, Verne's Nemo always takes the defensive; he sinks ships only when provoked into doing so. Verne did not let his character kill for the sake of killing. He believed Nemo to be a compassionate man whose actions were created by the repressive environment around him.

"Personally, I don't agree with Verne," said Fleischer. "Because Nemo built that kind of destructive machine, I don't think he'd play by fair rules and wait for somebody to attack him."

After developing Nemo's background and philosophy, Felton's next step was to devise a plot which would give the audience the promise of an exciting adventure.

"In the novel, Aronnax, Conseil and Ned [the three men assigned to find and destroy the evil "sea monster," which happens to be Nemo's *Nautilus*] simply go along as observers," the director said. "You can't do that for a long time on the screen. There has to be another story other than Nemo's. Earl [Felton] came up with a wonderful solution. He decided that the only way to tell this story and make it work as far as suspense was concerned was to make it about a prison break. Earl said, 'This is really a story about three men who are prisoners in a submarine. Aronnax does not want to escape, but the others are always plotting and scheming and trying to take advantage of the situation to get out.' Once Earl hit on that idea, and we knew who Nemo was and what motivated him, these two concepts meshed together into a workable



Captain Nemo's encounter with the squid was originally staged on a placid sea at sunset. These shots of Nemo (James Mason) in the grip of the squid (top) and his stunt double (right) being hoisted on high by a wire-rigged tentacle, show a reddish cast to the lighting and sky backdrop. After a week of shooting under director Richard Fleischer, the sequence was halted because its static quality and the bright lighting revealed the squid to be an obvious mechanical prop. The setting was later altered to a raging storm, and the scene was successfully refilmed by a second unit.



screenplay.

"Since we couldn't use all the incidents that were in the novel, we took what we felt were the most memorable scenes and put them in the script," continued Fleischer. "Everybody remembers the underwater burial, the cannibal attack, and the fight with the giant squid, so we had to include those incidents. We didn't use them in the same continuity nor in the same way because we counted on the fact that nobody ever really read the book very carefully. We felt they would be perfectly willing to accept our version, and they did. As a matter of fact, the story that is known today by most young people is the one we invented for the screen."

In Felton's adaptation, the *Nautilus* is powered by atomic energy—a far cry from Verne's electric submarine. "We had to modernize the story in order to give it a feeling of things to come. The challenge of our story was to keep the science fiction ambience to something that is no longer science fiction. We had to take a familiar object—the submarine—and make

it an object of wonder and fantasy. Our aim was to put the audience into the position of never having seen or heard of a submarine before, and to lead them through the wonders of this craft for the first time."

A lot of violence punctuates the screenplay—numerous fist fights, the destruction of several ships, the implied drowning of many sailors and an atomic holocaust which takes the lives of hundreds of people. This was unusual material for Disney, and most unusual of all was Felton's idea of Captain Nemo and his crew forming a suicide pact. But it must be remembered that the screenplay was written long before the Disney organization became restricted in the kind of material it was willing to handle.

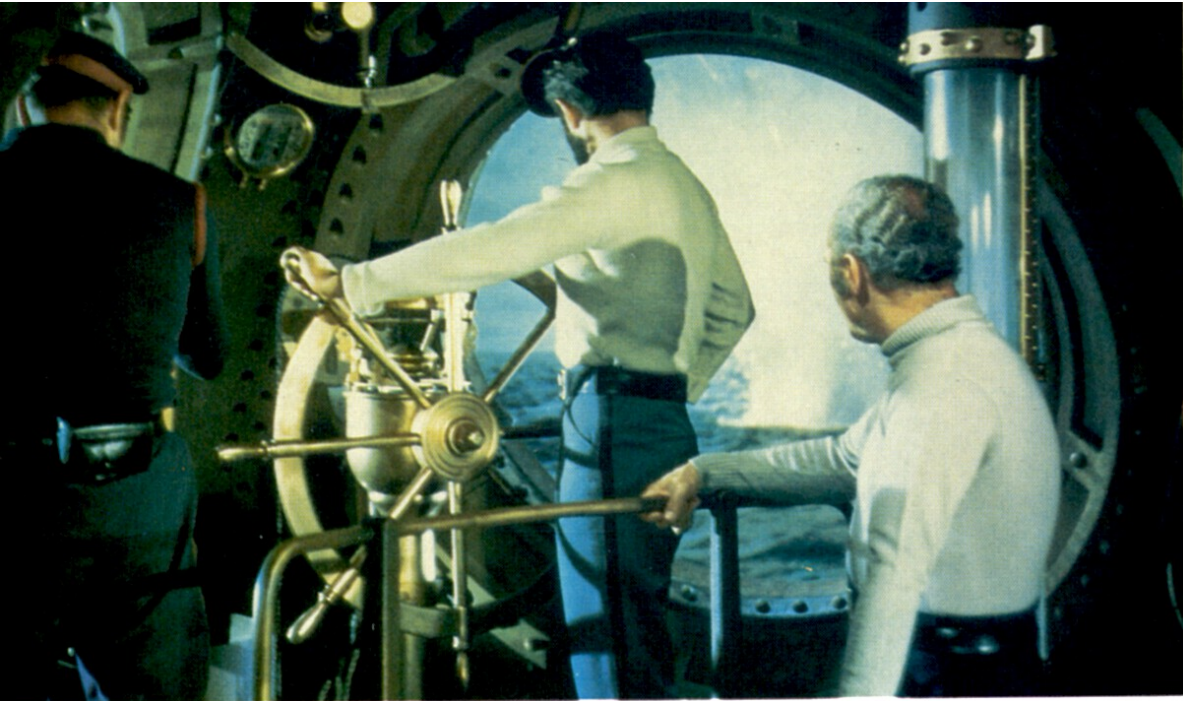
"If Disney studios made the picture today, they would not use the same storyline, and I don't think 20,000 LEAGUES would be as good a picture because they have an established pattern to their films now," said Fleischer.

"Walt had a marvelous instinct," he continued. "He had his

say in the formation of the story and made suggestions and contributions to the script. For example, the inclusion of the pet seal was his idea—the Disney touch. The script reflects his taste and a lot of his personality."

Another Disney touch was the injection of humorous material into the script to counterbalance the tense dramatic moments—scenes such as Ned's encounter with the cannibals and his interplay with the worrisome Conseil.

Felton's screenplay for 20,000 LEAGUES was not the first treatment the Disney production company commissioned. In 1952, while Goff was busy on the film's designs, Walt Disney hired scriptwriter John Tucker Battle, who wrote *INVADERS FROM MARS* (1953), to turn Verne's novel into a screenplay. Submitted in February 1953, a few months before Fleischer and Felton joined the project, Battle's script was a literal translation of every incident in the book, nearly 300 pages worth that would run more than four hours on the screen. Creative differences between Battle and Walt Disney led to the



Captain Nemo (James Mason) at the helm in the wheelhouse of the Nautilus, as it comes under enemy fire. The exploding shell eyed by Nemo and his first mate (Robert Wilke) through the starboard viewport is rear-projected effects footage.

commissioning of Felton's script at the recommendation of Fleischer.

Battle's first script had a few problems: his dialogue was flowery and long-winded, and it took more than 45 minutes of screen time just to get Aronmax and his party on board the *Nautilus*.

Disney sent Battle back to his typewriter and by September of 1953 he produced a second draft. Cut down to almost 200 pages, this draft was still faithful to the Verne novel and contained references to the preproduction art Harper Goff and his art department had been turning out all summer. The interior scenes followed Goff's early designs including a double air lock diving chamber. Goff later dropped the separate air lock as unnecessary, since the diving chamber could be pressurized.

Battle's second draft did have several interesting character developments, most outstanding of which was a claustrophobic Ned Land. At one point while the *Nautilus* traverses through a tunnel from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, Land goes wild, screaming that he can't breathe. He bursts into the wheelhouse, seizes control and careens the submarine into a tunnel wall, starting a rock slide that partially buries the *Nautilus*. Nemo frees the sub, rams through the collapsed portion of the tunnel and makes for the surface just as everyone begins passing out from lack of air.

The sequence neatly combines two elements from Verne's novel, the Arabian Tunnel and the trapping of the *Nautilus* at the South Pole, but such a character flaw would never do for a role that Disney thought of as the hero of the story.

Both of Battle's screenplays end with Aronmax and company mak-

ing their escape from the *Nautilus* as Nemo, overcome with grief and remorse, plunges the submarine into a Maelstrom, wildly playing his organ. It's a rousing climax, but unlike the Fleischer-Felton collaboration, Nemo has no motivation in Battle's script and remains a mystery to the end.

About the same time Battle turned in his second version, Felton completed his final draft, in late September. However, it would go through a total of nine revisions during the six months of principal shooting.

In its first steps toward filming, Felton's screenplay was first turned over to Disney's artists, and *20,000 LEAGUES* became the first film to have storyboards done for every line of dialogue. Over 1300 draw-

ings were made to visualize the story, and Harper Goff rendered more than 60 sketches of the giant squid sequence alone.

After his director and screenplay were secured, Disney moved on to casting, selecting four actors who combined expert craftsmanship with wide popular appeal. For the role of the red-blooded, muscle-flexing Ned Land, Disney chose Kirk Douglas. It was quite a change of pace for Douglas who usually played unscrupulous, high-strung characters; the part of the fun-loving harpooner gave him a chance to display a lighter side of his talent.

Hungarian-born Paul Lukas, who won an Academy Award for

his performance in *WATCH ON THE RHINE*, was selected to play the erudite French scientist, Professor Aronmax. Originally Charles Boyer, whom Disney had admired in Fleischer's *THE HAPPY TIME*, was slated to play the part, but he ultimately withdrew.

For the meek and mild-mannered Conseil, the professor's apprentice, Disney chose Peter Lorre, who, until this film, had long been identified as one of the screen's top heavies. The role of Conseil gave him the opportunity to show his comedic talents.

To portray the complex and mysterious Captain Nemo, the pivotal character in the story, Disney chose James Mason. The choice could not have been a better one. Although noted actors like Lionel Barrymore, Herbert Lom, Robert Ryan and Omar Sharif have portrayed the enigmatic captain in other films, both fans and critics agree that Mason's interpretation is the definitive one. The subtle shadings and marked intelligence of his performance gave depth and dimension to a character that might have been merely a villain in less capable hands.

"To tell you the truth, I never read *20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA*," said Mason, who now lives in Switzerland.

"I refused to do the film a couple of times," continued Mason. "It was presented to me by my agent at the time, Ray Stark, who tried to coax me into playing the character of Captain Nemo. But I was afraid *20,000 LEAGUES* was going to be a children's film, and I didn't like the idea of Captain Nemo being played down to a juvenile level. However, I couldn't help but think that the script was very good. Then Stark attacked me on the subject of the director, Richard Fleischer, who had recently made a

The salon of the Nautilus, looking aft, an example of the kind of work that won set decorator Emile Kuri an Oscar for the film.



The Nautilus

Harper Goff designed Nemo's submarine and set decorator Emile Kuri furnished it with style.

For the job of decorating the *Nautilus*, Walt Disney recruited Emile Kuri as set decorator from Paramount Pictures. Kuri, who was recommended for the job by art director John Meehan (they worked together on William Wyler's *THE HEIRESS*), ended up staying at Disney Studios for 20 years, winning Oscar nominations for his work in *THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR* and *MARY POPPINS*.

Kuri scoured marine hardware shops all over the Los Angeles harbor area, looking for the various nautical dials and gauges to be placed in the wheelhouse and throughout the submarine. Most of the furnishings were loaned out from the Paramount and MGM prop shops.

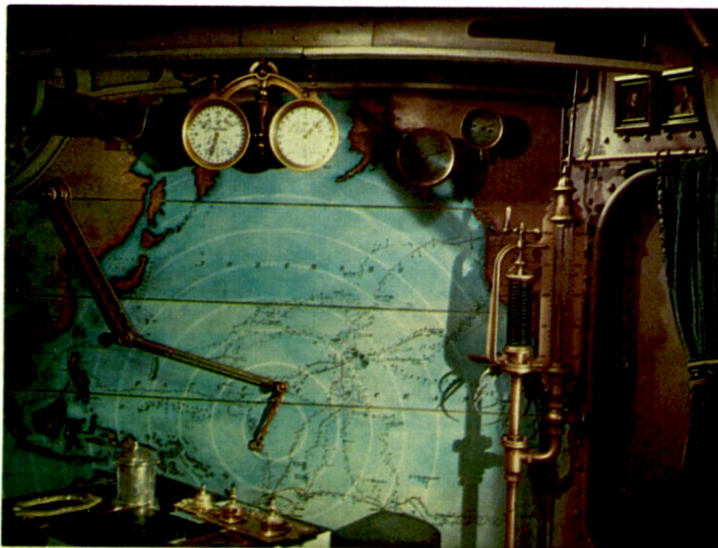
Recalled Kuri, "I remember looking in the empty salon just after construction was finished, and my first reaction was 'This place looks like a cave!' and then 'How am I going to make this look Victorian.'"

Kuri borrowed a Greek Amphora from a museum and rare volumes of books from the Library of Congress. His gold-on-red color scheme offset the salon interior and its plush fittings, velvet settees and drapes, persian rugs and other rococo decorations.

Built for nearly \$250,000 out of a full production budget of \$4.5 million, the sets of the *Nautilus* were constructed mainly of wood, plywood, masonite and a 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA innovation, fiberglass.

Most of the film's live action takes place in the submarine's Chartroom-Salon, which has a host of interest-

Above: The 11-foot model of the Nautilus as it was displayed at Walt Disney World in Florida until 1980, when it was put into storage. Below: A cutaway view, showing the layout of Harper Goff's submarine design.



ing props and set pieces: complex-looking gauges, the magnificent pipe organ and an unusual-looking iris shutter on Nemo's window to the sea.

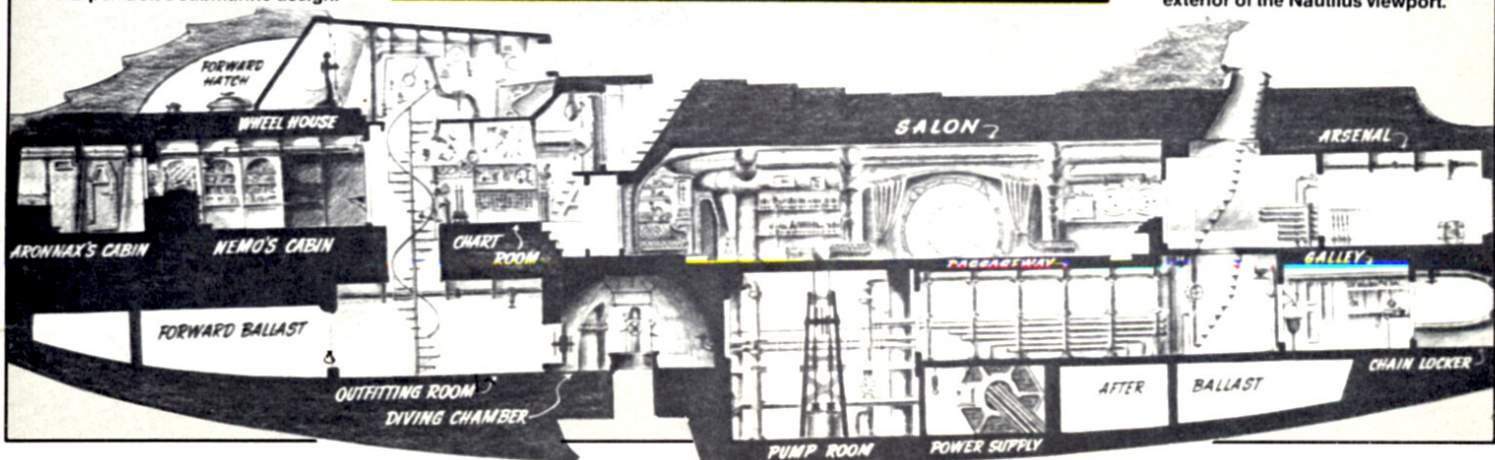
The film's designer, Harper Goff, recalled the development of the iris. "I wanted the iris to be an effective visual device which could either open a scene up or close it down," he said. "I took a lens from a camera and showed it to Bob Matthey, who was in charge of the picture's mechanical effects. 'How large can you make the iris?' I asked. Bob answered, 'As big as your damn window, if that's what you're thinking about.' He built the shutter and it worked perfectly the first time we tried it."

Other exceptional sets included the pump room and the submarine's power supply room. Built of masonite, fiberglass and wood, the pump room was rigged with practical effects (the pounding pumps, the prop shaft and a collapsing beam). The set was located on tank stage three so that it could be flooded.

The power supply room presented a novel design problem for Harper Goff, who needed to provide a modern nuclear reactor with an antique look. Goff designed a functional *looking* chamber fitted with cooling pipes. To give the room added visual excitement, Goff set a number of transparent salad bowls on its back wall and placed flashing, colored lights behind them.

Emile Kuri's rich set decorations dove-tailed perfectly with Goff's designs and were largely responsible for the success of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA.

Top Left: Nemo's chartroom, with the Pacific Ocean measured off in concentric circles emanating from Vulcania, his base. Left: Emile Kuri's Salon set, as viewed through the exterior of the Nautilus viewport.





The San Francisco docks, where the film opens, was an elaborate glass matte painted by Peter Ellenshaw (inset) and filmed on the backlot at Universal. The sign on the live action building was actually a painted element of Ellenshaw's matte.



film (*THE HAPPY TIME*) which had turned out well. Stark had no doubt that Fleischer would have an adult point of view; he believed the film had a good chance of being a 'grown-up' picture which coincidentally would hit the juvenile market. So, I was convinced.

"20,000 LEAGUES was a producer's film and a spectators' film," continued Mason. "It was conceived by Disney as a story that could be translated into one exciting sequence after another. It was a challenge for the set designer and special effects people, but for the director and actors it was routine. I do not believe that the acting parts were written at any great depth. Many sophisticates poooh-poooh 20,000 LEAGUES. However, it's still a popular film today because it's a good story well told. Disney insisted upon perfection. And I definitely share the fans' enthusiasm for the film. Not long ago I saw it dubbed into German. It was still terrific."

Later, Mason was offered—but declined—to reprise the role of Nemo in both versions of *MYSTEROUS ISLAND*.

Director Fleischer disagreed with Mason's statement about the film being routine for the director and actors. "I'm surprised James said that," Fleischer responded. "He couldn't be more wrong. It's just that Walt had a powerful personality. When you make a Disney picture, it's a *Disney* picture. Everyone else gets washed out—the direc-

tor, the actors, the writer. Until recent years, I got very little credit for directing 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA. Walt's personality overpowered the picture and the public thought it was *his* movie."

The film's casting and preliminary design work completed, 20,000 LEAGUES was ready to begin preproduction, focusing on the logistical problems of filming the underwater scenes. Although his studio built a tank expressly for the film, Disney thought it was necessary, in the interests of realism, to film the diving sequences on location, and thus limit dry-for-wet techniques and tank shots. In fact only one sequence, in which two divers discover a treasure chest inside a sunken galleon, was completely filmed in the indoor tank.

To supervise all diving operations, Disney chose Fred Zendar, a former U.S. Navy master diver and a veteran of scores of sea pictures, including *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, *THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA*, *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA* and *JAWS*. Working closely with designer Goff, Zendar's first task was to develop a special diving rig: Victorian-looking in appearance, yet practical and self-contained.

There were only two methods of going underwater: one in a diving suit and helmet which has air hoses

attached to a surface pump, and the other in scuba gear with air tanks strapped to the diver's body. Goff's original idea was to combine both methods and have a diver, wearing a helmet, receive his air from scuba tanks, instead of a surface pump. However, Zendar ruled out the idea because air could not be piped into the helmet from a scuba tank. A diver's air supply, which is regulated by a demand valve on the helmet, has to be adequate in both volume and pressure. This would require a greater amount of compressed air than a diver could ever get from a scuba tank.

Zendar and Goff decided to use the scuba method. Pooling their talents, they designed a rig which allowed a diver to breathe automatically with an aqualung. Zendar, who handled the technical aspects of the rig, placed an aqualung's inhalation and exhalation breathing tubes inside a Japanese pearl-diver's helmet. To receive or exhale air, a diver simply had to breathe through the mouthpiece which connected both tubes.

Zendar's next step was to create a

lightweight, watertight diving suit. "Walt didn't like the regular suit because it looked too bulky," the veteran diver said. "He wanted something tailored, so I got some surgical rubber, very thin rubber, and made suits out of that."

Because of his concern for what was, in essence, new prototype equipment, Zendar thought a little experimentation was necessary before he made the official presentation to Disney and Fleischer at the studio. On the night of November 6, 1953, Zendar, Goff and another diver went into the Del Mar Beach Club pool to test the equipment. With each diver wearing a helmet, modified scuba gear, lead weights, and 16-pound lead-soled shoes, they walked from the shallow end of the pool to the deep end without any difficulty. Everything had worked perfectly—until the day of the presentation to Disney.

"I tested the goddamn suit in the Disney tank on the first day," stunt diver Norm Bishop said. "Walt was there—everybody at the studio was there. Once I got into the water, I

A test shot of the Nautilus at the South Pole, a scene not found in the finished film. The edge of the painted backdrop is seen (right), during filming in the Fox tank.



realized there was a problem: I didn't have enough weight on me. Zendar, who was outside with the other people, saw me tiptoeing above the floor of the tank and knew immediately that I needed more weight on my belt. He signaled for me to come up."

Bishop made his way to the side of the tank and started for the ladder. "I was tired after spending ten minutes walking around the tank," the diver continued. "I barely made it to the ladder. Then, lo and behold, I passed out as I came up! I was out cold. Fred [Zendar] couldn't figure out what was the matter. After a day of asking questions, we found out that one of the special effects guys had cleaned the helmet—inside and out—with turpentine. The fumes, which I didn't smell, had caused me to pass out."

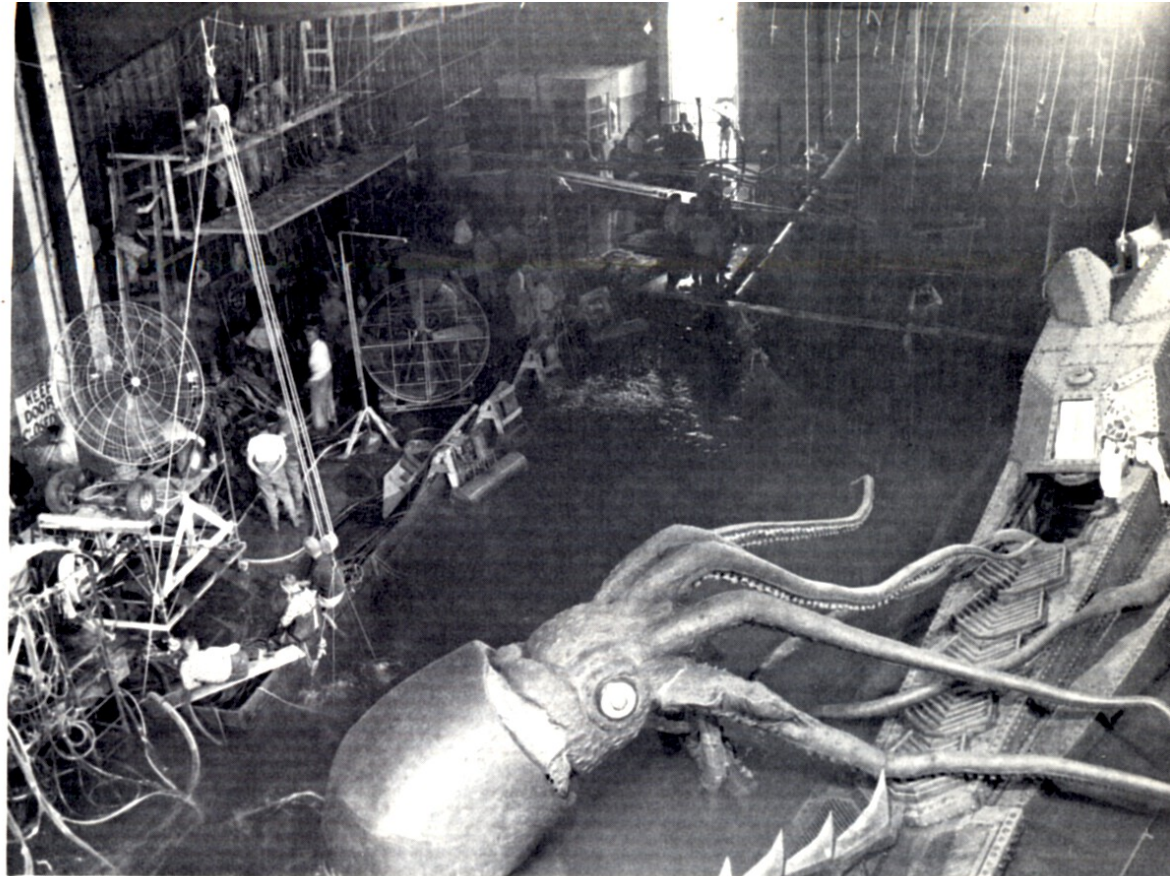
By this point, preproduction was far enough along for Zendar, Fleischer and Goff to leave Burbank to search for a good underwater location in the Bahama Islands.

"Freddy [Zendar] recommended the Bahamas because he believed the clearest water and best reefs were located there," recounted Fleischer. "We arrived in Nassau, hired a boat, toured all the islands, and went diving every day to scout shooting locations. First of all, we wanted to work in depths above 32 feet. If we went deeper, we would encounter greater pressure and greater dangers in working—a lot of time would be spent decompressing. Also, the sunlight falls off sharply below 32 feet, and there is no variety of color. We wouldn't get very much exposure because everything is blue.

"Eventually, we found a place called Lyford Cay, which was uniquely situated on the western tip of New Providence Island," continued Fleischer. "It had a beautiful reef, a white bottom, and was only 28 feet deep. Being on the tip of the island, we could shoot either on the lee side or the windward side of the cay. So, if we had bad weather on one side, we'd have good protection on the other. It was a perfect location."

The move to Lyman Cay, New Providence called for planning equal to that of a military maneuver. More than 20 tons of equipment—ranging from a 30 cent screwdriver to three specially-rigged underwater cameras valued at \$5,000 each—had to be packed into 212 wooden crates. Then a fleet of six boats assembled, including a 110-foot LCT, which served as the main base of operations, a LCM for use as a camera barge, and four speed boats which served as water-taxis.

On New Year's Eve, 1953, Fleischer and Zendar arrived in Nassau, New Providence with a crew of 54 men and enough equipment to sink a small barge. Because



THE SQUID FIGHT seen in the film was the work of second unit director James C. Havens. Shot in gale winds and rain with tortuous seas splashing (right) to obscure the mechanical squid and make it believable, the sequence was actually filmed at the shallow end of a massive tank built on Disney's Stage 3. On April 26, 1953, special effects technicians set up the wind machines, dump tanks and water cannon Havens rented for the scene from MGM. Grips on a high scaffold operate the squid's tentacles with guide wires. The reshooting cost Disney \$200,000.



the divers depended on compressed air when they worked beneath the water, two giant air compressors were flown in to fill the 350 cylinders, each of which held 200 cubic feet of air at 2,000 pounds pressure. On the average day, the troupe would use 50 of these cylinders, or 10,000 cubic feet of compressed air.

After one year of preproduction, filming finally began on January 11, 1954. The first scene to be shot was also the most difficult—a complicated burial sequence in which a crew member from the *Nautilus* is laid to rest in a coral grave. The scene, which took eight tedious days to film, required 33 men to be underwater simultaneously—11 in front of the camera and 22 behind it, including the cameraman, his assistants, prop men, grips, a still photographer and the ever-present underwater safety men.

On a typical day, Fleischer's first step was to diagram the action on a blackboard, and then have the actor/divers rehearse the scene on shore, step by step, until every man was familiar with every movement.

After the dry rehearsal, the cast was taxied to the LCT barge where

they put on their diving gear. Dubbed the "Nemo" in honor of the moody captain of the *Nautilus*, the diving rig consisted of six parts: a copper helmet with breastplate; a flexible, waterproof suit; two compressed air tanks; an emergency tank worn on the front of the suit; lead weights to balance the air tanks; and lead-soled shoes. Standard wear included long woolen underwear, heavy woolen socks and black leather gloves. The total weight of the gear was approximately 150 pounds.

After being put on air, the divers were helped from their bench to a rowboat which transported them to the shooting location. Once there, they lowered themselves to the ocean floor from ropes which hung over the sides of the boat. Each diver was met by an underwater guide (clad in a yellow shirt) who led them to his position in front of the camera.

"Each man carried a small air bottle with a needle which could go into the cuff of a suit and give a diver air if he had a problem," recalled Zendar. "We also had surface guards who were always in verbal contact with the boat."

Added Bishop, "We had a safety man for every two divers, including a 300-pound wrestler who could tuck one under each arm and swim up."

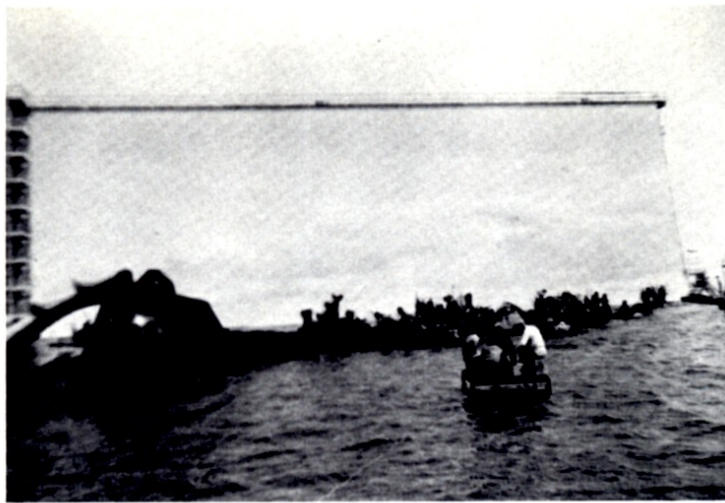
To photograph the underwater scenes, cameraman Till Gabbani used a self-powered, remote-controlled Mitchell camera with a CinemaScope lens inside a pressurized, waterproof case. Specially adapted for underwater filming by the Disney Machine Shop, the camera was mounted on a scaffold-platform which could be raised from five to 20 feet. Gabbani also used a portable Aquaflex Camerette, encased in a water-tight blimp, for "swim through" and dolly shots.

To communicate underwater, the Disney crew devised a set of 12 hand signals to cover such film directions as "action," "cut," "repeat scene," and—most important of all—one for "emergency—get me to the surface immediately!"

"We had well-planned emergency procedures if something should happen to a diver," said Fleischer. "Because we were so safety-conscious, nothing ever happened—until the people from *Life* magazine, who were covering the picture, asked us to stage an emergency so they could photograph a rescue operation. We decided to play along. However, while planning the fake emergency, two *real* ones occurred! One diver ripped his suit on a piece of coral. We took him out of the water immediately.

"The other emergency was more unusual," Fleischer continued. "The only way a diver could release the stale air in his helmet was by pushing an inside valve with the back of his head Fleischer. "One diver was getting a bruise on his head from hitting the valve, so he decided to wear a woolen cap to help stop the irritation. But each time he pushed the valve, the cap would move a little further down his forehead. Inevitably, it slipped down over his eyes and made him absolutely blind.

"He raised one arm, which signaled that he had a problem, but it wasn't serious," Fleischer continued. "The safety men came over to him and looked through the front window, but they couldn't see



Filming the native attack on the Nautilus in Fox's Sersen tank. This angle shows the extent of the huge painted sky backdrop, 77 feet high and 224 feet in length.

anything because it was too dark inside. Eventually, another diver came over and put his copper helmet against the helmet of the diver in distress. Earlier it was discovered that the divers could talk to each other when they put their helmets together. When the diver was asked what the problem was, he let go of his stiff-necked mouthpiece and replied, "The cap's over my eyes!" As he answered, the cap slipped further down and covered his mouth! Since he couldn't get the mouthpiece to breathe, he raised both arms which indicated that he had a *serious* problem. The safety men got him to the surface quickly and unscrewed his helmet

so he could get air."

Although these emergencies were rare, filming beneath the waters of Lyford Cay was still unusually laborious. The underwater illumination from the sun was spotty due to cloud cover, and its duration in the best of times never lasted more than six hours. Shooting was usually done between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., with a maximum of four dives a day.

"A diver's oxygen supply was good for only one hour," said Fleischer. "The whole operation had to be completed within that limited period for safety. We would allow no more than 55 minutes from the time the first diver was put on air until the last diver went off air and was back on the barge."

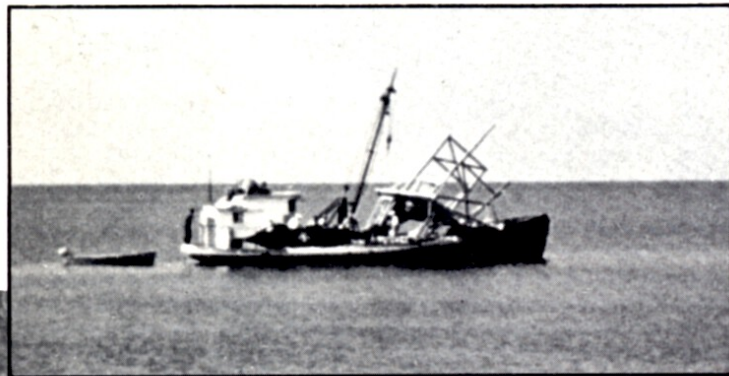
Daily the crew faced frustrating weather, choppy water and underwater turbulence. "On some days, when the conditions seemed right,

a cloud would cover the sun and we'd have to stop because we didn't have enough exposure," Fleischer said. "On other days, the tide change would lift up the stuff from the bottom, and the silt would hang in the water for hours and drift right in front of the camera." To avoid having the divers kick up clouds of sand and coral dust, the director had heavy hemp matting carpeted along the ocean floor.

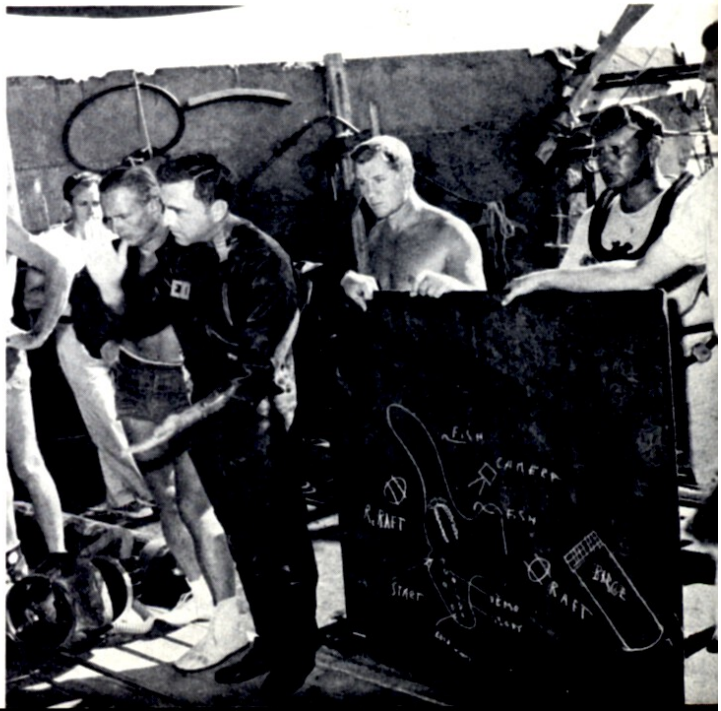
Although the reef abounded with numerous species of colorful fish, capturing them on film proved difficult. Frightened by whirring cameras and human activity, the reef fish would always scatter in different directions before a shot was completed. Because every scene required the presence of as many creatures as the camera could catch, local fishermen were recruited to net large quantities of them. Once netted, they were placed in wire mesh pens until needed for a scene. When Fleischer was ready to shoot, the fish would be placed in small cages by the prop men, who released them out of camera range on cue.

The most unusual incident experienced by the Disney company involved an eight-foot shark. "After the shark was captured and killed, we sewed up its mouth and left it on deck overnight," the director said. "The next day, we attached a cable to its mouth so we could pull the creature in any direction. I wanted an over-the-shoulder shot of the shark, so a camera was tied to the shark's back with a rope that had a slipknot. If anything went wrong, the cameraman simply had to pull the slipknot to release the camera.

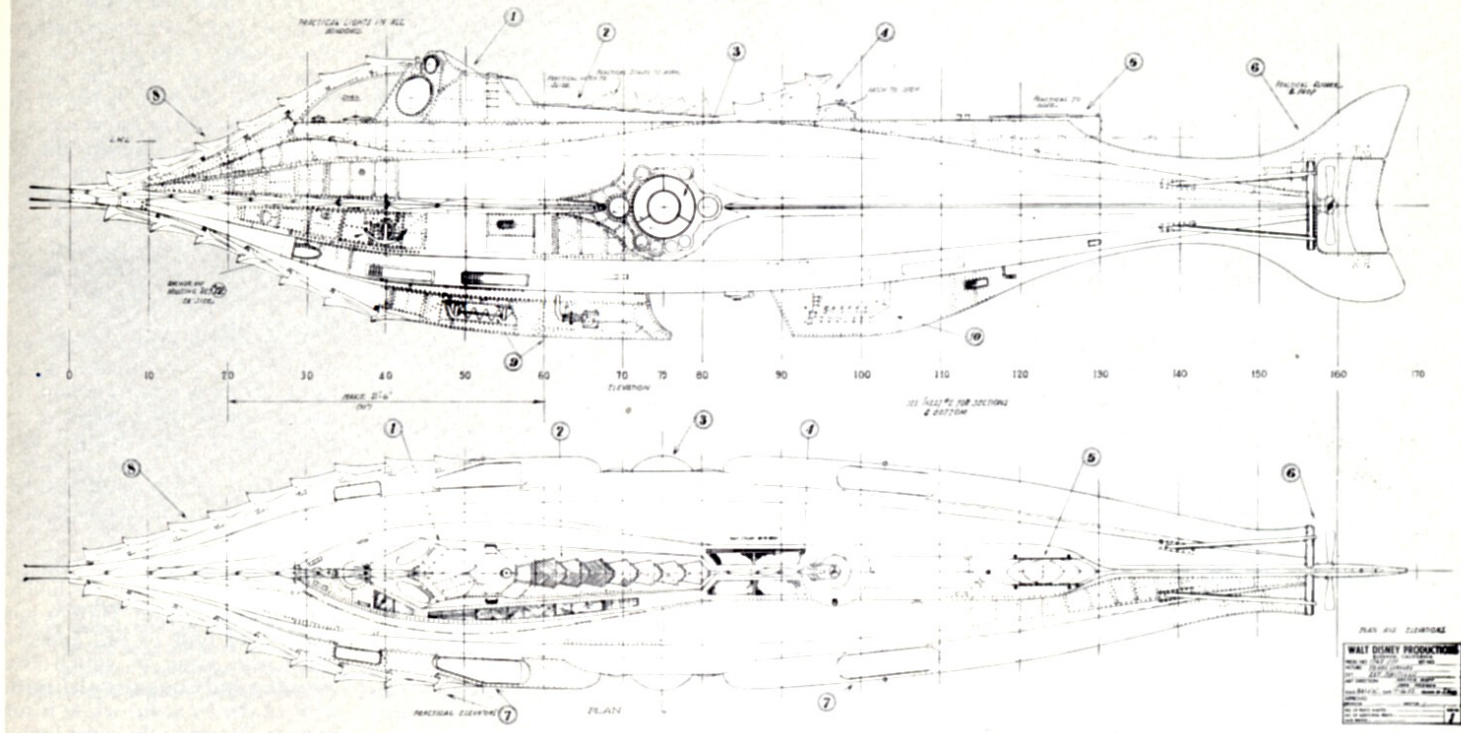
"We put the shark into the water and made a couple of dives. With-



Captain Nemo conducts an underwater burial (left). Note carpet on sea floor to keep down silt during filming in the waters of Lyford Cay, the Bahamas. Richard "Nemo" Fleischer, in wetsuit (right), directs the divers in preparation for the scene, which is sketched-out in detail. The diving barge (inset) included a wood-braced set of the Nautilus diving hatch, and a cast-iron cutout of the Nautilus used for undersea shots where the submarine is seen from the divers' point-of-view.



Nautilus Blueprints



Scale plans of Harper Goff's design for Nemo's submarine drafted by the Disney art department for the construction of the 11-foot effects miniature.

out any warning, the shark revived on the last dive, broke the cable and dived straight down. The cameraman pulled the slipknot, but it failed to release the camera. The shark took off into the deep with the man in tow. He refused to let go. Finally, he was able to free the camera, but he damaged both eardrums in the process."

Realizing he needed the shark for several scenes, Fleischer offered a bonus to the person who successfully retrieved it. Since the shark was not considered dangerous—its mouth was still wired—everybody decided to give it a shot.

"Two divers went out to deep water to look for it," the director said. "At first they didn't see anything, but then one of them spotted the shark. Swimming up to the creature, he grabbed the tail and shook it, hoping to force the shark back to the barge. Suddenly, he felt a tap on his shoulder, and saw the other diver pointing at the creature's mouth, which apparently was not wired. They were intimidating the wrong shark! I was sitting on the barge when I saw these two divers come out of the water like beach balls. Needless to say, they got out in a hurry. We never did find the shark."

By the middle of February (1954), Fleischer had finished shooting the major portion of the underwater footage. (A second unit, under the direction of editor Elmo Williams, would tie up the loose ends). Fleischer turned to filming the cannibal island sequence with actors Kirk Douglas and Peter Lorre. Because a suitable location could not be found in the Bahamas, the director decided to shoot on the

island of Jamaica, a tropical paradise known for its beautiful flora and white sand beaches.

Arriving in Montego Bay, the company recruited local residents to play the cannibals. Shooting progressed smoothly, and the sequence was completed in two weeks. On March 2, the exhaustive location work finally came to an end. Seventeen days over schedule because of bad weather conditions, the cast and crew headed back to California and the controlled conditions of the Disney Studios.

Returning to Disney's Burbank lot after eight weeks of location shooting, the main unit began four months of principal photography. On March 10, Fleischer started shooting the fight with the giant squid, the most technically difficult sequence in the film and one that plagued the production

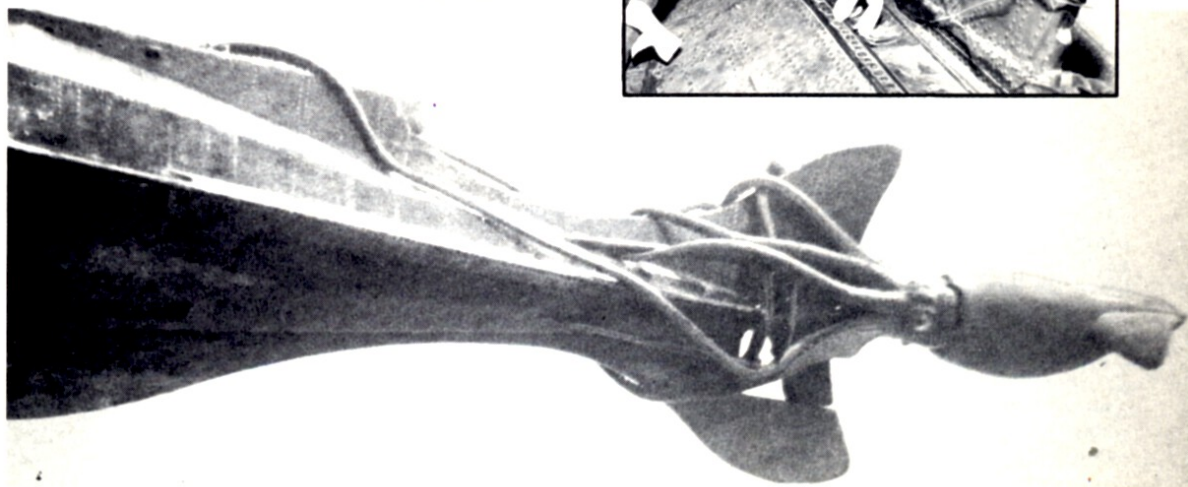
for months.

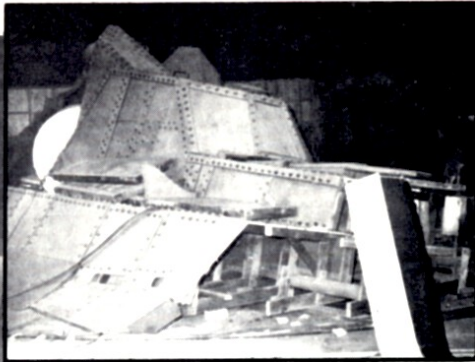
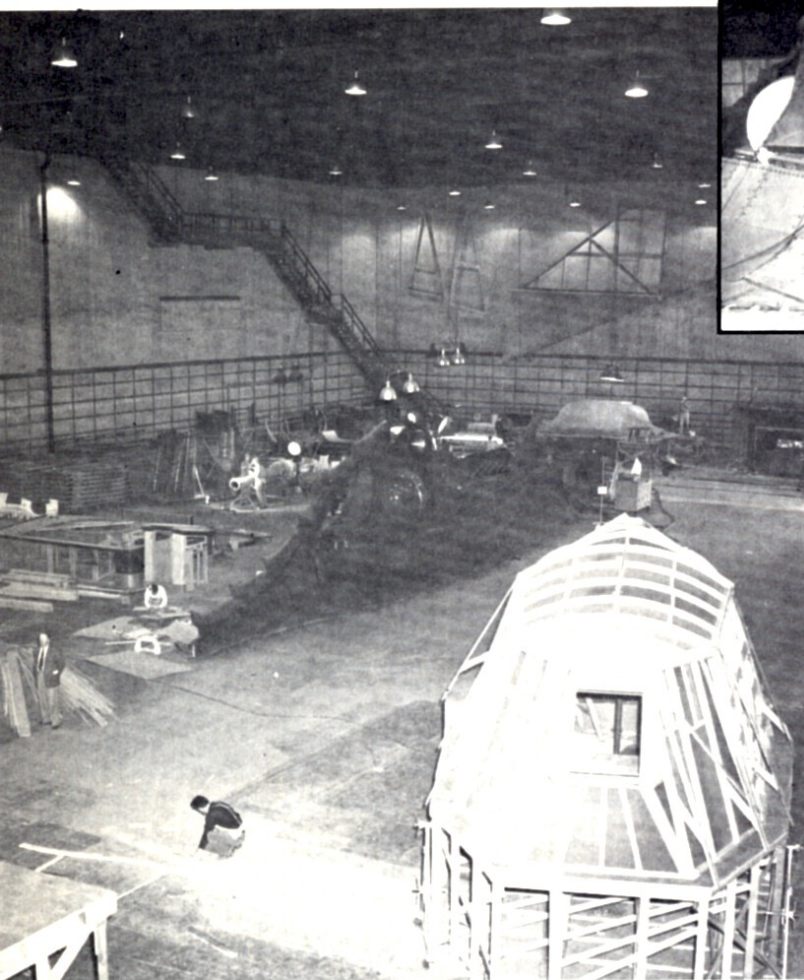
Getting things started were sculptor Chris Mueller and mechanical effects expert Robert A. Mathey, who were responsible for the creation of the monster squid. Mueller began his career as an apprentice sculptor working under his father on the San Francisco World's Fair in 1914. By 1936, he found himself working in Universal Studio's staff shop, where he came up with scores of creatures, including the "gillman" in *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK*

LAGOON.

Mueller's reproduction of the giant squid differed only slightly from the real animal. When the art department blew up the image of a squid to gigantic proportions, it was discovered that the squid's tentacles were too short in comparison with its elongated body. To make the creature more formidable in appearance, Mueller stretched the tentacles to twice their length and tapered them, using rubber, steel spring, flexible tubing, glass cloth, lucite and plaster to construct

The 11-foot Nautilus model and a miniature of the giant squid, sculpted to scale by Chris Mueller, for the shot where the behemoth grabs the submarine. Inset: Both models served to block-out the live-action squid fight with pipecleaner actors.





Production designer Harper Goff (far left) surveys set construction on Stage 2. In the background is the finished exterior deck set of the Nautilus. In the foreground, the interior set of the wheelhouse takes shape. Inset: Details of the exterior deck set's wood construction are visible as it is torn-out of a display at Disneyland, years later.

the middle of shooting and we'd have to glue them back."

Since Fleischer had to continue shooting the rest of the film, Disney hired second-unit director James C. Havens to restage and reshoot the squid fight. A veteran director of action sequences, Havens' credits include *CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS*, *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (in which he directed all of the underwater scenes) and both versions of *MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY*.

Disney screened the original footage of the squid fight for Havens. "It was terrible," he recalled. "Everything looked fake. There was absolutely no menace to it. Also, the actors didn't take the fight seriously and clowned around on the set. The editor who put the footage together had a sense of humor, too; he dubbed in voices for James Mason and the squid. For example, while Mason was jabbing at a tentacle with his harpoon, his dubbed voice would say, 'Sorry about that, old chap.' Then the squid's beak would open and reply, 'That's quite all right, dear boy, because I have nine more!' It was

very funny."

Havens' solution to the problem was to reshoot the fight in a tremendous storm, with the wind and waves crashing into the submarine. The director believed the sequence would be far more exciting with Nemo fighting the elements as well as the squid, and the "bad weather" would hide the artificiality of the squid. [Fleischer disagrees with Havens, however, and credits writer Earl Felton for the idea of shooting the fight in a storm.]

"I told Walt that a terrific gale would add more menace to the fight," Havens said. "He said, 'Go ahead, you've got a blank check. But make it right—it's got to be right or we haven't got a picture.'" The new sequence would cost Disney \$200,000 and a six-week delay in shooting.

While waiting for Matthey to come up with a better method for operating the squid, Havens took his second unit to San Diego to shoot the scene in which Ned, Aronnax and Conseil are left on the deck of the *Nautilus* while it submerges. To make the scene look as realistic as possible, a mock-up of the boat's afterdeck and dorsal fin was attached to the stern of an actual submarine, the *USS Redfish*. One remote-controlled camera was screwed down fairly low on the deck while another was stationed on top of the conning tower at periscope fairwater. On deck were Fred Zendar, Gil Parker and Charles Regan, who doubled for the actors. Simulating a dive, the *Redfish* was supposed to go down only far enough for the cameras to shoot the ocean lapping at the stern surface.

"The captain and I were on the bridge when he ordered the boat to submerge," recalled Havens. "But it went deeper than expected and washed the three stuntmen overboard. The captain and I had to climb up to the top of the conning tower while the *Redfish* continued to submerge. Soon all that was visible on the surface were two guys

them.

While Mueller gave the squid its body, it was up to Robert A. Matthey to give it life. Matthey, who has spent 50 years in the film industry, became interested in the field of special effects while working in RKO's prop shop on the mechanical props for *KING KONG*. RKO's series of *TARZAN* films gave Matthey the opportunity to create a variety of mechanical animals, including a walking turtle that could spit water and a radio-controlled 15-foot alligator. Another creation, a giant octopus that attacked John Wayne in *WAKE OF THE RED WITCH* (1918), attracted Harper Goff's attention, and Matthey soon found himself working on 20,000 *LEAGUES*, his first of many Disney films.

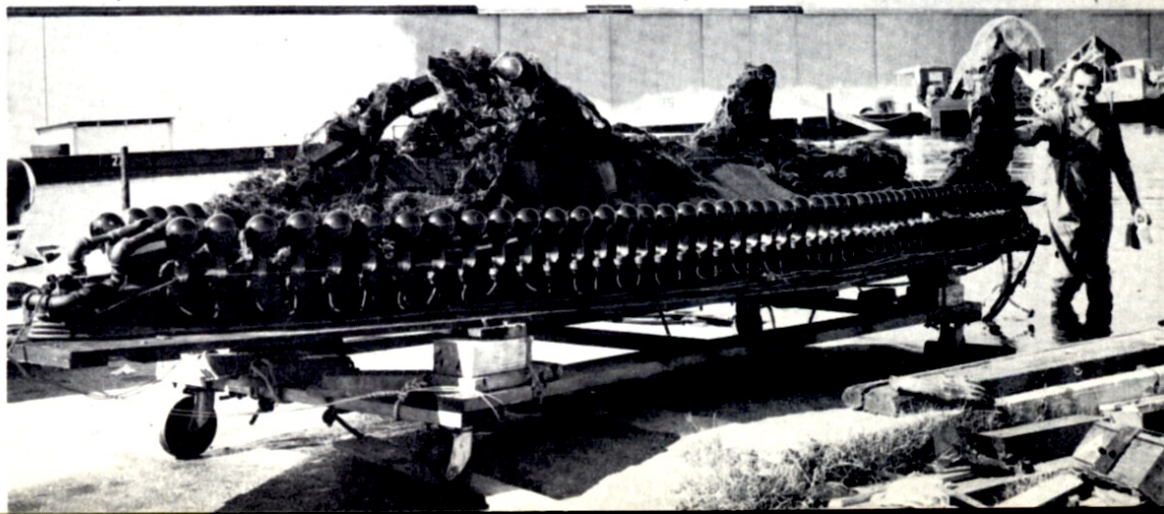
On March 17, after a week of shooting the squid fight, Disney stopped the filming. "No matter what I did, or what any director could have done, I couldn't make the fight look realistic," remembered Fleischer. "The scene took place on a placid sea at sunset. In the bright light, it was difficult to hide the flaws, especially the wires that supported the tentacles. When you tried to do something with the squid, it looked phony as hell.

"For example, its body, which was filled with kapock, would absorb water and become so heavy that the technicians couldn't move it," continued Fleischer. "The

added weight would break the wires and the squid would just lay on the deck like a lox. After a few days of struggling with it, Walt said to me, 'Stop working on this scene and go on to something else. Let's see if we can solve the problem.'"

"The problems were numerous," Goff added. "The deck looked like a concrete island. With all the people and activity on board, the deck should have floated and canted to one side. The tentacles were another problem. They would deteriorate right before our eyes. Big chunks would fall off in

Effects technician Les Wharburton prepares to float the 22-foot model of the Nautilus at Fox's Sersen Tank. The light bulbs which ring the miniature below the waterline were to make it appear to glow in the water. A water cannon in front enhanced the model's bow wake. The seaweed camouflage was designed for a scene at the film's beginning, but the effect was not used.





The *Nautilus* lies in wait, prior to ramming the nitrate ship. Filming the scene at Fox's Sersen tank, an artist paints the backing in front of which the miniature of the nitrate ship will float. A 10K stage light mounted on a tower above the backing provides a reflection of the setting sun. The light and the mountain cut-outs to reflect on the water were covered by a Peter Ellenshaw glass matte during filming.



hanging on to two periscopes. Finally, the crew in central control got wise and surfaced before we got washed off. Fortunately, two boats went out and picked up the three men." The submerging scene, which lasts less than a minute on the screen, took nearly one week to set up and shoot.

Meanwhile, director Fleischer was putting his actors through their paces on soundstages in Burbank. Although both Kirk Douglas and James Mason were considered temperamental actors, it was Paul Lukas, who played the kind and open-minded Aronmax, with whom the director had the most difficulty.

"In the beginning, everything was fine," the director explained. "I didn't have any trouble with Kirk or James. I got along with everyone except Paul. He and Peter Lorre were the closest of friends when we started shooting, but by the time we finished the picture, they weren't talking to each other.

"Paul was going to sue Walt, Kirk and myself," continued Fleischer. "He was going through some kind of crisis. He was a very distinguished stage actor and as actors grow older, they have difficulty remembering their lines. Paul had that problem, and I think it disturbed him. When he couldn't remember his lines, he'd blow up at somebody. He and I had a terrible argument on the set one day. He thought his dialogue was terrible and blamed Earl Felton for it. I defended the writer and told Paul to blame himself because he couldn't remember his lines. I said it because I had finally lost my temper."

In April, the main unit moved to the 20th Century-Fox backlot to film exteriors. The deck of the *Nautilus* was moved in sections via

trailer trucks to Fox's Chicago Lake, which served as the location for Nemo's base. Another Fox facility rented by Disney was the huge Sersen tank with its painted sky backdrop, used to film the scene in which the cannibals are shocked with electricity while attempting to board the submarine. After two weeks of shooting, the main unit returned to Disney's Burbank lot to shoot additional interiors.

On April 26, second-unit director Havens went back to re-shooting the all-important squid fight. In order to get the rough weather needed for the scene, Havens rented MGM's wind machines, dump tanks, water cannons and other effects equipment, which cluttered Disney's Stage 3.

The deck of the submarine, which had been on an even keel in the first version, was now canted to port in order to give the impression that the squid was clinging to the hull. Working closely with art director John Meehan, Havens replaced the sunset backing with a black and gray cyclorama.

"There is no color in the sky on a dark and stormy night," said Havens. "For that reason I graded the cyclorama down from pure black to medium-dark gray at the horizon line so that we'd get some differential between that and the sea."

After several weeks of trial and error, Robert Matthey had finally devised an effective method for operating the mechanical squid's 20-foot-long tentacles. "We utilized vacuum and air pressure," explained Matthey. "It was a system that had never been used before. Each tentacle, which had a pneumatic tube and thin spring steel interior, was hooked into an air pump. When you pressurized the interior, the tentacle would expand

and straighten out. When you vacuumized it, the tentacle would draw back and coil up. Each tentacle was supported by half a dozen wires and, in some shots, we had as many as 50 people in the stage rafters working them.

"The most difficult problem was getting those tentacles to do what you wanted them to," he continued. "They seemed at times to have a mind of their own. A lot of rehearsal went into coordinating the tentacle movement. After a lot of practice, we could get one to reach out and literally roll up an actor's leg."

This was, indeed, puppetry on a grand scale. The squid's 10-foot-long body was attached to a hydraulic ram that could raise it several feet out of the water; a dolly below the ram could move the body in any

direction. Its snapping, parrot-like beak was operated pneumatically, and other actions, like the movement of the eyes, were electronically controlled. A team of 16 men was needed to operate the mechanical beast—which weighed nearly a ton.

"Walt gambled everything on this picture, including his studio and the future of Disneyland," said Havens. "There were many days when Walt would bring down a number of guests to the effects stage to see the shooting of the squid fight. These guests were money people—bankers, owners of oil refineries and chemical plants—wealthy businessmen whom he was trying to interest in the Disneyland project. He needed money badly because it was impossible to build the park himself.



An effects crew rigs the model of the nitrate ship at Fox's Sersen tank. The free-floating model was designed to be pulled through the water by cables. Inset: The Abraham Lincoln and nitrate ship miniatures in their storage carriers.



"We had a grandstand built on the edge where Walt's guests could sit and watch the action with the squid," he continued. "Walt wanted his potential investors to realize that he was making an exciting picture that would be popular with the public and do well at the box office."

Because the squid fight took place at night during a storm, the faces of those on deck were indistinguishable before the camera, therefore neither Kirk Douglas nor James Mason were needed on the set. However, on May 10 and 11 (which was the only time Fleischer and his unit worked on the sequence), both stars were present to film their close-ups. Things did not go smoothly. While maneuvering toward the squid, one of Mason's legs became entangled in a lateral wire, which swept him overboard. When the crew realized that the actor was being pulled under the water by the wire, they quickly jumped into the tank to help him. Luckily, Mason surfaced uninjured.

On May 12—nearly three months after the squid fight sequence was first attempted—Havens wrapped it up, completing the film's toughest work.

Even with this big sequence out of the way, Fleischer and his crew still found the last weeks of principal photography hectic. Not only did they have to shoot the opening sequences of the film, but also interior scenes that required water effects, like the flooding of compartments after the submarine is shelled by a warship.

Filming the water-effects scenes involved rebuilding and reinforcing the set pieces and mounting them in a shallow section of the tank on Disney's Stage 3. Because of extensive preproduction planning, the shooting of the flooded interiors went smoothly and without major delays.

In early June, the main unit moved to the back lot of Universal Studios to shoot exteriors for the San Francisco sequences that appear in the beginning of the film. After a couple of days, the

company returned to Disney Studios to film additional pick-up shots and wet interiors. Finally, on June 19, Fleischer completed principal photography with the filming of the Treasure Galleon sequence, with divers Norm Bishop and Ed Stepner doubling for actors Lorré and Douglas.

Ralph Hammeras, director of effects photography for 20,000 LEAGUES, was one of the great film pioneers, who invented the "glass shot" and was among the first to use rear-screen process photography. Hammeras worked mainly for Fox Studios, and it was there that he was approached by Disney, who was negotiating with Fox for the use of their CinemaScope lenses, along with various production facilities and some of the studio's special effects personnel. Hammeras joined the project in November, 1953—a few months before on-location shooting started—and was ready to begin filming tests on December 22.

The first tests shot were of a prototype model of the *Nautilus* designed by Harper Goff. At this time, there was only one CinemaScope lens, and Fox was using it on *THE ROBE*. Fox would send it over to Disney's Burbank studio, via motorcycle, several times a week until another lens could be made by Bausch and Lomb. To free-up the lens for other tests, Goff's model was built to anamor-

phic proportions—the same height but squeezed to only about half the length—and filmed with a regular flat 35mm lens. The image, when projected through an anamorphic (Cinemascope) lens, had the correct proportions on the screen. The delivery of a second anamorphic lens for Disney's use and more design changes on the submarine eliminated the use of this unique model.

The first miniature sequences to be shot were the underwater scenes of the *Nautilus*. An 11-foot model of the submarine was the first out of the shop; the hull was made of 1/8-inch iron plates with the detailing done on brass plates "sweat-welded" on. The model was powered by five car batteries, with practical lights in the wheelhouse and salon viewports and an electric motor to turn the prop. The entire model, fully rigged, weighed more than a thousand pounds.

Shooting the underwater scenes was done in a tank in the new sound stage at Disney studios. Using both wet and dry-for-wet techniques, the submarine was run through the tank on a track rig designed by consultants Howard and Theodore Lydecker. Controlled from a panel next to the camera, this rig could run forward or reverse and raise or lower the model. Hung from the rig by four main wires, some six other wires controlled the practical effects built into the model.

Shots of the submarine cruising the depths of the sea were fairly standard effects for a submarine film, but the script of 20,000 LEAGUES called for much more ambitious action, including underwater scenes of the *Nautilus* ramming through the keel of a warship, running aground on a reef, traversing the tunnel into Nemo's base and its encounter with the giant squid.

Finishing the cruising scenes in fairly short order, the miniature unit was ready to move on to the more elaborate set-ups. The attack on the nitrate ship was accomplished by first using the dry-for-wet technique. For the close-up shot of the *Nautilus* tearing through the



keel of the doomed ship, the models were photographed upside down, so wood debris from the nitrate ship would seem to float up. The following long shot of the submarine pulling away from the hull of the sinking ship was photographed underwater in the tank with the Lydecker rig.

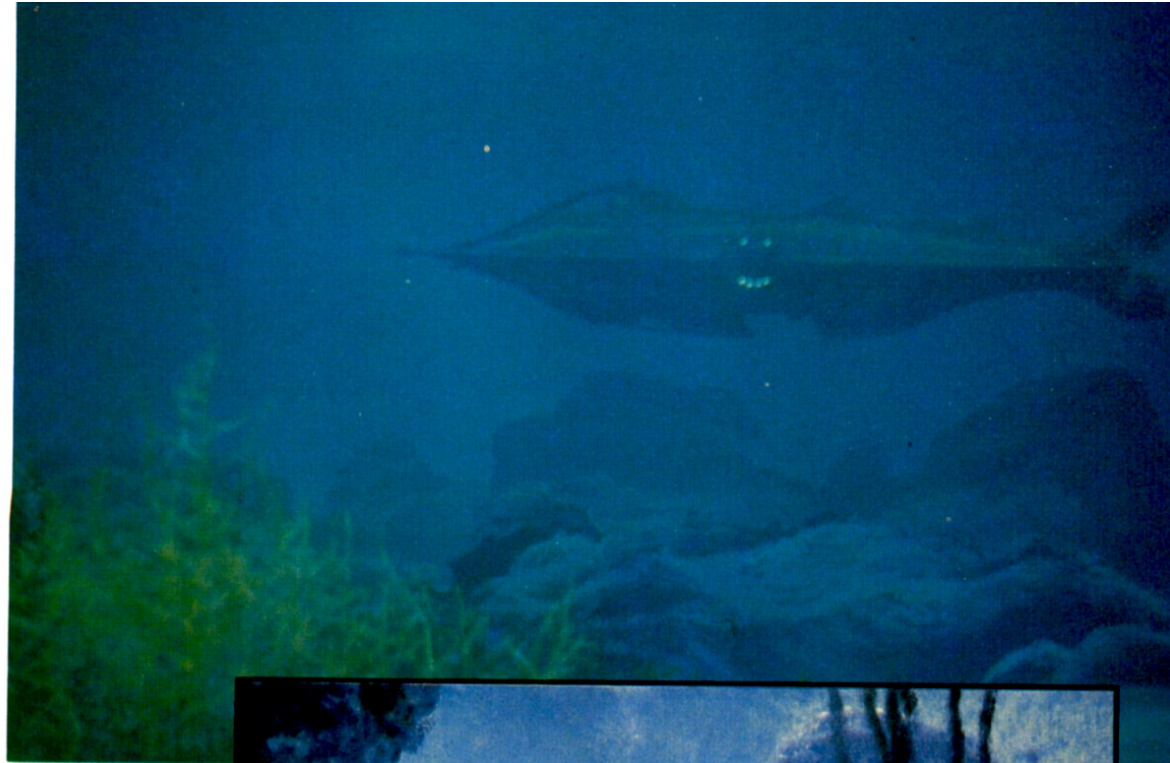
Dry-for-wet shooting was kept to a minimum even though much greater control could be exercised. Toward the end of production further scenes would be shot using this technique to extend the shots in the Vulcania tunnel, with actual wet scenes kept to quick establishing shots of the *Nautilus* tracking through the miniature tunnel set.

One of the key miniature effects scenes is the attack on the *Nautilus* by the giant squid. Hammeras tackled what seemed a difficult shot in a rather simplistic, but very effective way. Wrapping the tentacles of a small squid, sculpted and cast by Chris Mueller, around the 11-foot model and tying the ends with thread, Hammeras pulled the squid away on a guide wire, then he cleverly reversed the film. This technique gave the illusion that the monster was swimming toward and then latching onto the *Nautilus*.

Walt Disney had only one complaint about Hammeras' work. Warren Wray Hamilton, miniature painter and technician on 20,000 LEAGUES, recalled, "Ralph shot so much test footage of the miniatures that Walt called him in on the carpet a few times, but other than that we had a fairly free hand and were able to test and shoot things over until they were perfect."

With completion of most of the effects work on Stage 3, the miniature unit moved to Fox Studios to shoot exteriors in Fox's effects tank, called "Sersen Lake" after the studio's resident effects expert, Fred Sersen. The tank was 300 feet long, 190 feet at its widest point and about three feet deep, with a 20-foot

Diver Fred Zendar, as Ned Land, and two stuntmen, standing in for Conseil and Professor Aronnax, are filmed clinging to a dorsal fin of the *Nautilus* mounted on the U.S.S. Redfish, as it submerges in the waters off San Diego.



The 11-foot *Nautilus* miniature running amid a seascape created on the floor of the mammoth effects tank built on Disney's Stage 3. Inset: A preproduction concept for the submarine's voyage through an undersea grotto, painted by Peter Ellenshaw, the film's matte artist.



deep pit in the center. Running the width of the tank and about 30 feet from the rim was a painted sky backdrop, 73 feet high and 224 feet wide.

For exterior effects shots, models of three conventional ships, as well as those of the submarine, were used. Largest and most detailed, the *Abraham Lincoln* was nearly 30 feet long and rigged for such practical effects as bow wave, cannon and smokestack smoke, and running lights.

Rigged the same as the *Abraham Lincoln*, the *Golden Arrow* (sunk by the *Nautilus* in the opening of the film) and the unnamed nitrate

ship were acquired from Fox. The *Golden Arrow* model was originally a sailing ship, but the Disney model shop added paddle boxes to give it a new look. The nitrate ship had been seen in RAIDERS OF THE SEA starring Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and in REAP THE WILD WIND. All three models were free floating and were towed through the Fox tank by cable.

For scenes of the *Nautilus* running on the surface, Hammeras principally used a 22-foot-long waterline model of the submarine, which was attached to a wheeled dolly that was weighted and pulled by cable. Rigged with air hoses and

water jets for foam and bow wash, the model was ringed with lights below the waterline to give the effect of phosphorescence in the night shots.

Pulled through the tank by a truck, the surface model was photographed by Hammeras using a 35mm camera, with a Bausch and Lomb anamorphic lens, overcranked to 50 frames a second to slow down the various practical effects. After shooting innumerable tests, Hammeras eliminated several planned sequences as too weak, including an interesting shot of the *Nautilus* threading through the ice floes of the South Pole.

Largest and most elaborate of the "live" surface effect shots is the final scene of the film: the destruction of Nemo's secret base and the sinking of the *Nautilus*. The shot called for the island to blow up, the warships anchored around it to sink, a tidal wave to engulf the submarine, and the sub to sink with the smoking remains of the island in the background.

"In all my years of working on miniatures, this sequence was one of the most complicated and the most successful," said Warren Ray Hamilton, miniature painter and technician on 20,000 LEAGUES. "We had the sky backdrop in the background, then a cut-out of the





Peter Ellenshaw's preproduction painting of the prison camp at Rorapandi. Inset: The actual scene as filmed, featuring Ellenshaw's glass painting of the ship, rendered while the scene was being shot. Ellenshaw composited the painting with separate foreground and background exposures of the same extras as slave laborers.

island done by Peter Ellenshaw [Disney's resident matte expert], then the charge [60 pounds of flash powder]. Now all this was *behind* the rim of the tank.

"In the tank, we had some small warships, rigged so we could pull them underwater," he continued. "And in the center of the tank was the *Nautilus*. We had a "dead man" weight in the pit with a cable and pulleys so we could pull the submarine down by the tail. Underwater we had two dollies, built-up and weighted, that were moved by a pulley system and a truck to generate the tidal wave. At the narrow end of the tank was the camera with a glass painting by Ellenshaw hanging in front to extend the height of the painted backdrop.

"The only real trouble we had

with the shot was with the tidal wave," continued Hamilton. "The driver of the truck that pulled the dollies was a little anxious and on the first try took off like a bat. Well, we didn't know how much water the dollies would displace, so the truck took off and the wave rolled down the length of the tank, right up the ramp at the narrow end and washed out the camera crew."

After several trail-and-error retakes, the shot was made to work. "It went something like this," said Hamilton. "The charge was set off, the island cut-out was dropped below the rim of the tank, and the warships were then pulled under. Then the wave started, passing the submarine, which was given some slack so it could be tossed about. Then it was pulled under."

Contributing greatly to the success of the special effects in 20,000 LEAGUES were Peter Ellenshaw's expert glass paintings, which were photographed live on the original negative as opposed to being combined optically.

Ellenshaw began his matte painting career on such films as Alexander Korda's *THINGS TO COME* and *THIEF OF BAGHDAD*. After a stint in the R.A.F. during WWII, he began to supervise matte work on such films as *STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN* and *QUO VADIS*. Ellenshaw went to work for Disney in the early '50s, providing paintings for the producer's British-made, live-action

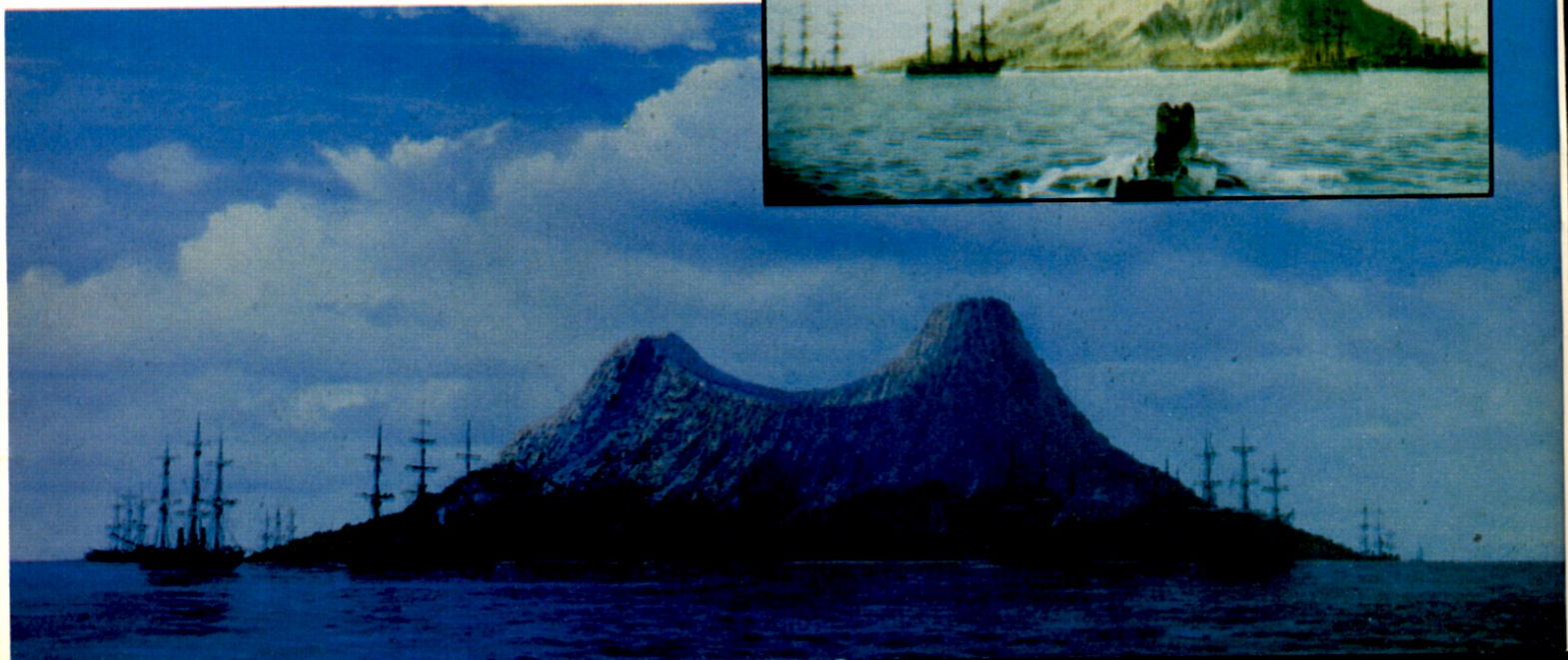
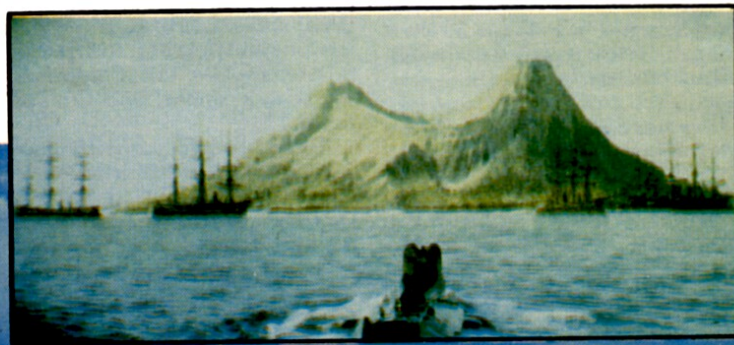
films. Disney recognized Ellenshaw's value to his live-action plans and invited the artist to move to Los Angeles. Arriving during the end of preproduction for 20,000 LEAGUES, Ellenshaw went to work immediately with Hammer's miniature unit.

One of Ellenshaw's first jobs was a series of "mood" paintings for the special effects scenes, including several of the underwater shots of the *Nautilus* in silhouette, gliding among giant coral formations.

"The mattes were photographed mostly at Fox as glass shots done on the original negative," remembered Ellenshaw. "One of the most difficult shots was of the submarine surfacing in the lagoon. We mounted both the camera and the painting rather precariously on top of the 70-foot scaffold that held the painted-sky cyclorama and shot down on the miniature sub that moved across the Sersen tank."

Another matte, which depicted the Rorapandi Island shoreline, was actually painted on location. Recalled second-unit director James C. Havens, "Peter [Ellenshaw] and I, along with the crew and extras, went down to a plant near Corona to shoot portions of the slave camp sequence. This plant manufactured various types of clay products. We chose the location because of the different clay formations. I directed the action with the extras, while Peter painted his picture. We worked like hell all day to get the scene completed. It was a difficult chore because I had to match up all the action with Peter's matte." [The principal shots of Nemo and Aronnax at the Rorapandi beach were filmed earlier by Fleischer at Fox's backlot.]

Added Ellenshaw, "Because we had a limited number of extras, we

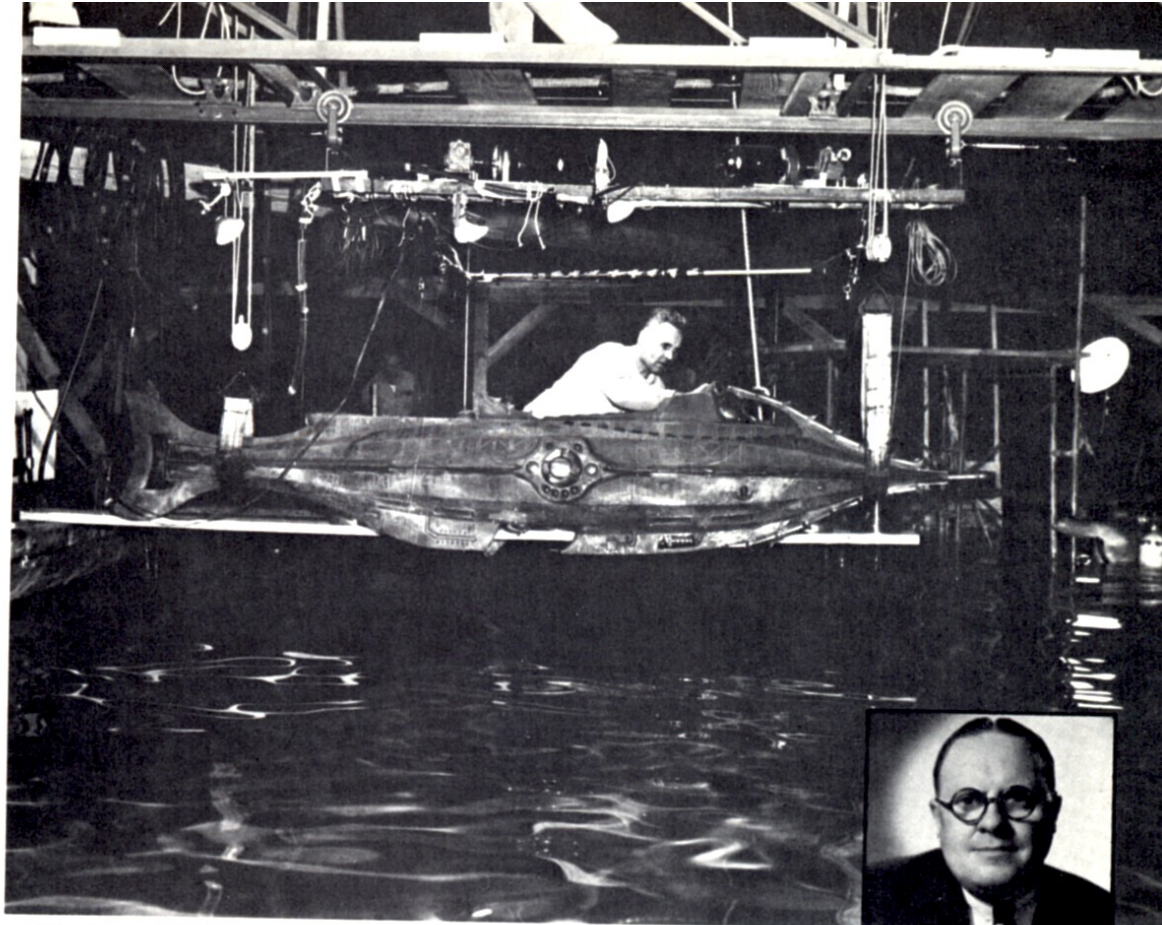


shot the foreground of the prison camp in the morning and then moved the actors to the background where we shot the same scene late in the afternoon [to give the impression that there were twice as many prisoners]. Then we shot the painting on the original negative."

Designer Goff was very pleased with the way the mattes fit into the film. "In the picture, there were 27 mattes and most people never notice them," Goff said. "I've looked and couldn't count more than 14, but I know all 27 were there."

"Most matte shots are too ideal," continued Goff. "The extreme now is to paint everything. Today's mattes are photographed so clinically that you can't help but see what's wrong with them. Peter [Ellenshaw] knew that if he painted a detailed matte, it would never be shown to full advantage on film. He knew what could be photographed and what the audience was going to see. He knew what to do with the camera if there was a shortcoming in the matte or glass. For example, he might say, 'We're losing our light. Since we can't spend any more time on the painting, let's open the camera lens and diffuse it.' Then he'd get the painting to look just right. He wasn't afraid to go out on location, paint the matte, and shoot it right there. He's a guy who knew what he wanted to do."

Besides the mattes, most people who see 20,000 LEAGUES won't necessarily notice something else—animation effects. John Hench, veteran Disney animator and effects supervisor on the film explained why: "The animation scenes were not especially different from anything else we had done. They just seemed to work in. Usually, you can pick out animation when it is combined with live-action footage. But I don't know anybody who can pick out all the animated effects in the film."



Film pioneer Ralph Hammeras (inset) was in charge of the film's special effects, which were recognized with an Oscar. The 11-foot miniature of the Nautilus is shown (above) being lowered into the effects tank built for the film on the Disney lot. Warren Hamilton adjusts the rigging, connected to an overhead track with winding motors to raise and lower the model.



At one point during preproduction, Disney planned many more animated effects to go along with the live-action footage, including many shots of an animated submarine cruising beneath the water. Said designer Harper Goff, "Once the miniature submarine was built and the stage tank completed, we found that there was something unreal about animation effects—they're convincing in a way and beautiful, yet they're not convincing."

The animated shots of the *Nautilus* were scrapped, but this did not

eliminate animation altogether. In addition to the *Nautilus*' defensive electrical charge, which is an obvious example, animated fish, jellyfish and seaweed abound in the underwater footage. One example of the subtlety of animation in 20,000 LEAGUES is the scene in which the *Nautilus* rams the nitrate ship. As Aronnax, Conseil, and Ned Land watch from the salon viewport, the nitrate ship sinks, trailing bubbles and debris, burning internally. All bubbles, boards and other debris were animated in, including the burst from

the subsequent explosion.

With all visual effects work and filming finished, 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA moved into the postproduction phase in the late summer and fall of 1954. At first, things did not go well.

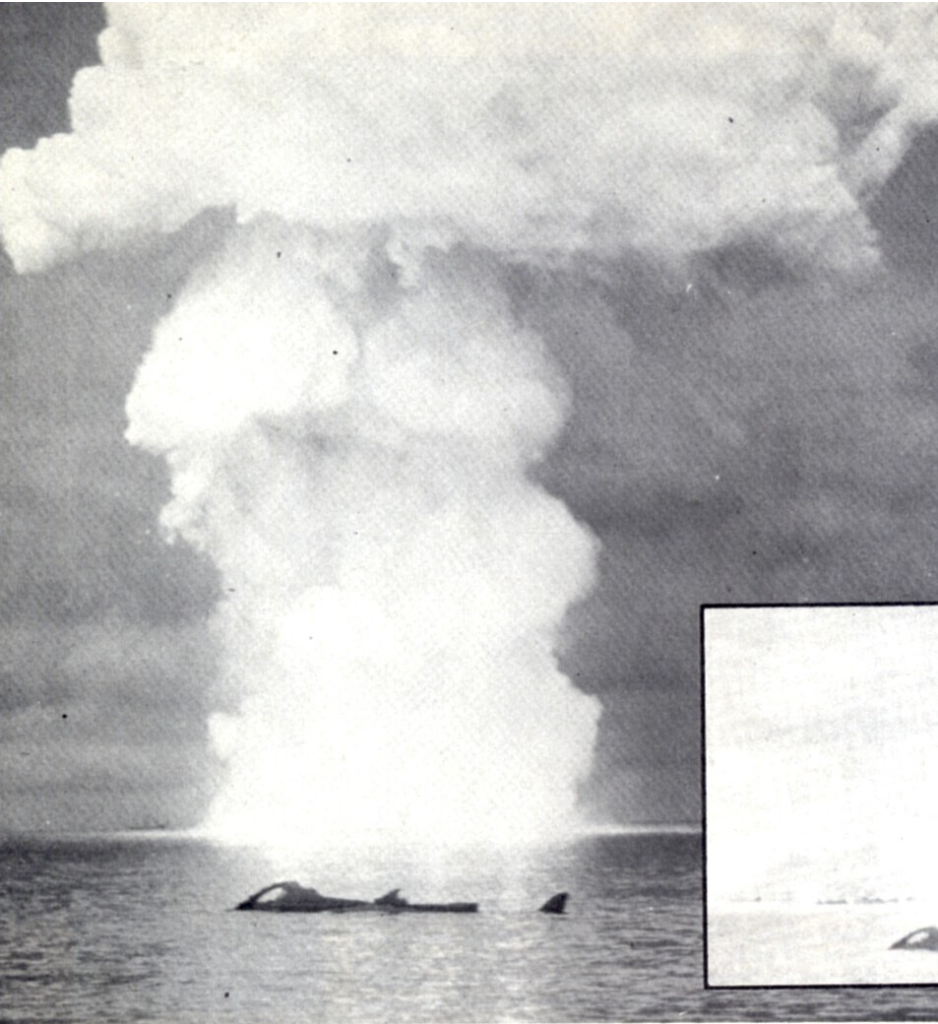
"The first sound effects job on the picture was very, very bad," editor Elmo Williams remembered. "We had to scrap the whole thing. I took on the job of supervising the sound effects. I remember going out one night to the Farmer's Market on Fairfax with one of the sound men. They had a huge Chinese gong hung there, and we taped the sound as we beat on it very gently. We reversed the sound, and it gave us the 'humming' sound of the *Nautilus*' engines that's almost constantly in the background."

Brought in by Richard Fleischer at the start of production, Elmo Williams' editing credits include Charles Chaplin's LIMELIGHT, THE MIRACLE OF THE BELLS and HIGH NOON, for which he won an Oscar in 1952.

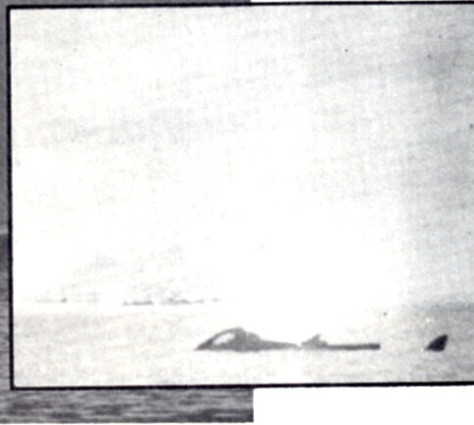
"I did editing on the film at night," recalled Williams. "During the day, I stayed on the set with the director most of the time. I started editing right at the beginning of production and cut it together as shooting progressed. The first rough cut was three hours long, and it still wasn't quite finished. We shot a number of extra scenes and had planned quite a few more, such as the submarine at the

VULCANIA served as Nemo's island base in the South Pacific. Production designer Harper Goff sketched this concept of the island early in preproduction. For the film, the island was a glass painting rendered by Peter Ellenshaw. The artist retouched the painting shown here in 1978, adding the water that was to be matted in during production. The painting is shown as it appears in the film (inset), combined with a shot of the 11-foot Nautilus model, filmed in the Fox effects tank. The model and painting were composited on the original negative.





APOCALYPSE is envisioned in the form of a mushroom cloud at the film's climax, as Nemo destroys his base on Vulcania and the enemy ships that surround it. This atmospheric shot was filmed with the 11-foot Nautilus model in the effects tank at Fox, using a special sky backing. The explosion was set off using 60 pounds of flash powder. During the first few frames of the blast, as the charge goes off, the bright light casts a shadow of a cutout of the island onto the sky backing (inset).



South Pole, Atlantis, sailing through the ruins of Port Royal, and a lot more live action. Some of those sequences were never realized because we were going to have too much film.

"One shot I cut was of this weird luminescent fish in the deep trenches under the sea," continued Williams. "After Nemo fixes the sinking submarine's engine, he opens the shutter in the salon and shows his prisoners these strange creatures. About the same time the film was due to be released, *Life* magazine, *National Geographic* and others were running spreads of the real thing. The animators had done a great job, but it was *their* version of this kind of fish, so we eliminated it."

E editing was finished by the fall of 1954, and Disney was ready for the next step, distribution. Although both RKO and Paramount bid to distribute 20,000 LEAGUES, Disney decided to release the film through his own newly-formed distribution subsidiary, Buena Vista. Previous Disney productions had been released by RKO, which took a large share of their grosses; Buena Vista lowered Disney's distribution costs from 30 to 15 percent of the gross and gave the studio total control over the exploitation of Disney's films.

Looking like it would be a big boxoffice winner, 20,000 LEAGUES got its first commercial break weeks before the preview. A docu-

mentary on the making of the film, UNDERSEAS ADVENTURE, aired on Walt Disney's brand new television series, DISNEYLAND, and scored hot Nielsen ratings. The interest was obviously out there; Disney and company geared up for a solid success.

On December 9, the film was previewed for several hundred exhibitors at the Astor Theater in New York. The reception... fantastic! Prior to the screening, five major chains had paid \$3 million in advances to play the film.

Two weeks later, on December 23, the film opened in 60 houses across the nation to generally favorable reviews. *Variety* called it a "special kind of picture-making, combining photographic inge-

nuitly, imaginative story-telling and economic daring. The production itself is the star."

Said the *Los Angeles Times*, "As a sci-fi job, 20,000 LEAGUES is the ablest since the previous year's WAR OF THE WORLDS. Nearly everyone should find the voyage exhilarating."

The film earned more acclaim—in the form of two Oscars for best art direction and best visual effects. Because the Oscar for special effects went to the Disney Studio, neither Ralph Hammeras, Peter Ellenshaw or Robert Mattey were honored for their contributions. (Disney once told Fleischer, "Why do the work yourself when you can get someone else to do it and still get the credit for it.")

After the awards ceremony, Disney wrote a congratulatory letter to Hammeras, thanking him for his creative contribution to the film. He closed the letter with an invitation for Hammeras to stop by his office any time he wanted to take a look at the Oscar.

Because Harper Goff was not allowed screen credit as production designer on 20,000 LEAGUES, the Academy could not put his name up for nomination. When asked if he had any ill-feelings about the matter, Goff shrugged and answered, "Not really, because most people in the industry knew who actually designed the picture. Although the Academy did not recognize my work officially, they did send me an Oscar, but it was not inscribed."

Despite winning awards and critical plaudits, 20,000 LEAGUES apparently never made a profit. Although it was one of Disney's most popular films, grossing \$6.8 million in its first release and \$2.2 million on its second in 1963, the boxoffice figures never exceeded the film's \$9 million price tag.

No one can call the film an *artistic* failure, however. The film is considered one of the best science fiction films of all time and, along with MARY POPPINS, Walt Disney's greatest attempt at live action.

And while the film is not regularly revived at theaters, 20,000 LEAGUES lives on at Walt Disney's parks. Bits and pieces of the film—from the original mattes to the 11-foot model of the Nautilus—have popped up at both Disneyland and Walt Disney World. The Nautilus will appear in a new attraction at Disneyland called "Discovery Bay," which should start construction by 1985.

This is all fine and good, but there are many out there who have never had a *chance to experience* the film on a big screen. Here's hoping that the Disney powers-that-be will bring it back, preferably on a regular basis. Like the perennial reissues of Disney's animation films, 20,000 LEAGUES is a timeless classic that should live on forever. □

An example of the film's elaborate storyboards. Begun as an animated project, the film was the first live-action feature to be fully story-boarded, a technique developed by Disney on his cartoon features that has become a standard filmmaking tool.



"20,000 Leagues" Before Disney

From George Melies to George Pal, the Jules Verne book was often in development but rarely ever filmed.

Although Disney's version of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA is the best-known adaptation, there were at least five other attempts to film the famous Jules Verne classic.

The first one, made by French film pioneer George Melies in 1907, had little to do with the Verne book, and was really nothing more than a hodgepodge of dancing girls, dancing sea creatures and a Faerie Queen. Melies had burlesqued Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* in a similar fashion five years earlier.

Nine years later, Hollywood took its first crack at it. Made by Universal Pictures (then known as the Universal Film Manufacturing Co.) and released in 1916, the film was the first to use underwater motion picture photography, made possible by the second unit work of George and John Ernest Williamson.

In order to film the underwater sequences, the Williamsons made use of a rather ingenious device, a "deep sea tube," which was a hinged series of waterproofed iron tubes some three feet in width.

Mounted on one end of a barge, the tube, which was invented by their father, Captain Charles Williamson, could be lowered to a depth of about 35 feet. To one end of the device, the brothers added a four-ton, cast-iron sphere, complete with heavy glass viewport, which made filming underwater possible.

After a year-and-a-half of preparation, the Williamsons moved their equipment to New Providence Island, which, ironically, is also where the underwater, on-location shooting of Disney's version took place.

For diving suits, the brothers obtained a dozen "re-breather"

outfits from England; the suits recirculated the same air, removing the impurities chemically. Soon after the suits were obtained by the movie company, the British Government declared them vital to the war effort and banned their sales overseas.

A Universal publicity release for the film stated that a 125-foot submarine, able to submerge to a depth of 40 feet was built for the film, and that "the submarine was fitted with a power plant for propelling itself through the water and equipped with regulation tubes and practical torpedoes." Studio press release hyperbole certainly hasn't changed much in 70 years.

A box office success for Universal, the film incorporated elements of Verne's *Mysterious Island*, as well as some contemporary World War I references. It was spoofed a year later in two cartoons, 20,000 FEATS

UNDER THE SEA by Paul Terry and 20,000 LEGS UNDER THE SEA, featuring the Katzenjammer Kids.

No prints of the 1916 version are known to exist, and the negative was destroyed when a hurricane swept through John Ernest Williamson's home in the Bahamas. Only a handful of stills remain.

In 1929, MGM made MYSTERIOUS ISLAND, which also featured underwater footage by John Williamson. The troubled production, starring Lionel Barrymore as Captain Nemo, had three different directors during its three years of filming. Its commercial failure scared Hollywood away from Verne's works for many years.

However, MGM did make a stab at 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA in the mid-'30s. Slated to be directed by Victor Fleming (GONE WITH THE

Captain Nemo leads an undersea hunting party in the 1916 Universal version of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, the first film to make use of underwater cinematography.

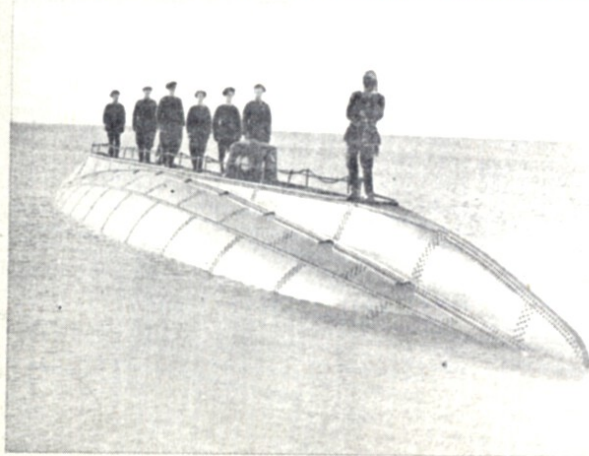
WIND), with Spencer Tracy to play Captain Nemo, the project died soon after preproduction started.

In 1949, Robert Lippert (Lippert Pictures), who made such science fiction films as UNKNOWN WORLD, LOST CONTINENT and ROCKET-SHIP X-M, tried to launch 20,000 LEAGUES but was unable to complete the project.

And, finally, in 1951, George Pal attempted to develop his version of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, but Paramount would not come up with the cash. A year later, Walt Disney acquired the film rights from Pal, and the rest is cinematic history.



Scenes from the 1916 silent version. Left: Captain Nemo and his crew on the deck of the Nautilus. Right: Nemo (Alan Holubar) displays the wonders of the deep to his guests through the submarine's portal. The film used Verne's concept of Nemo as an Indian Prince. No copies of the film are known to exist.



REVIEWS

The horror of nuclear annihilation intrudes on sunny suburbia

THE DAY AFTER

ABC Theater, 11:30, 195 mins. Directed by Nicholas Meyer. Produced by Robert A. Papazian. Screenplay by Edward Hume. Cinematographer, Gavne Rescher. Music, David Raksin, Virgil Thomson.

Dr. Russell Oakes	.....	Jason Robards
Jim Dahlberg	.....	John Cullum
Nancy Bauer	.....	Jobeth Williams
John Huxley	.....	John Lithgow
Airman McCoy	.....	William Allen Young
Alison Ransom	.....	Amy Madigan
Stephen Klein	.....	Steven Guttenberg
Helen Oakes	.....	Georgann Johnson
Eve Dahlberg	.....	Bibi Beschow

Commercial television—home of the jiggle and the leer—lived up to its potential on November 20, 1983. More than 100 million viewers tuned to ABC and were shocked and stunned by Nicholas Meyer's *THE DAY AFTER*, a documentary-style look at the aftermath of nuclear war. The film's acceptance probably assures the success of Lynne Littman's *TESTAMENT*, a quieter but no less horrifying nuclear war story.

Both films expose the idiocy of most other post-holocaust tales, a genre which suggests that nuclear war is survivable if you're in a cave with plenty of canned food and paper napkins.

THE DAY AFTER and *TESTAMENT* refuse to let us relax. Each film brings the horror into sunny suburbia, into the mainstream of American life. Where filmmakers like Sidney Lumet (*FAIL-SAFE*, 1964) and Stanley Kubrick (*DR. STRANGE-LOVE*, 1964) confined their vision to the milieu of the military, Meyer and Littman deal with ordinary people whose precious, ordinary lives are destroyed.

THE DAY AFTER, in particular, has been criticized because its characters seem stereotypical and overly-familiar, yet that familiarity is precisely the film's point and the source of its undeniable power. Lawrence, Kansas—America's geographical and philosophical heartland—becomes the nation in microcosm. Screenwriter Edward Hume introduces us to doctors, farmers, young soldiers, housewives and their children. A guileless boy and girl barely out of their teens look forward to their wedding: "Cut it nice, Ollie," the boy proudly instructs the barber. "Today's my last day as a free man."

These people are as American and as unassuming as Americans can be. But they are still special. They work, they play, laugh, argue and live their lives . . . until the exhausts of American missiles puff across the brilliant Kansas sky. Then in 30 minutes the city will be gone and everybody—*everybody*—will be dead or dying.

Experts tell us that the destruction depicted by Meyer and Robert Black's Praxis Filmworks is barely



Above: Panicked motorists on the highway outside Kansas City witness the beginning of World War III in *THE DAY AFTER*. Inset: Jane Alexander comforts her son, Ross Harris, in *TESTAMENT*, a bleak personal drama of the aftermath of nuclear war, minus the disaster film clichés.



severe enough to suggest the truth, and that the enormity of an actual nuclear holocaust is beyond belief. Surely no television screen could capture it. Still, images in *THE DAY AFTER* caused my eyes to fill with tears. When the nuclear bombs explode over Kansas we see not just the destruction of cities and lives, but the liberation of madness. This isn't war—it's the unleashing of Cthulhu and the escape of the banshees. The world is covered with the dark cloak of insanity, and all rivers become the River Styx.

One hopes for an opportunity to see Meyer's original four-hour cut, as presented, *THE DAY AFTER* seems rushed and overstuffed. Some characters are mentioned but never introduced, while many others are not adequately explored. This complaint aside, acting (notably by Jason Robards, William Allen Young and Jeff East) is uniformly excellent.

Effects work is generally very effective, too, especially shots of the missiles cutting through the sky, the burgeoning mushroom clouds and some chillingly bleak matte paintings. The skeleton effect is the only real disappointment. Because the victims are stiff and immobile, they look less like human beings than what they really are: optical effects. Though startling by television standards, the sequences haven't nearly the impact of the rest of the film.

THE DAY AFTER's drama is enhanced by a fine sense of irony. The

title sequence, for example, is composed of a series of magnificent aerial shots of the Kansas countryside, backed with stirring, utterly American music by David Raksin and Virgil Thomson. Many early scenes show schoolchildren playing and learning. Later, a horse runs in a meadow, a bee buzzes over a flower, a bird wheels into the sky.

Most poignantly, an insomniac farmer gazes at the starry splendor of the heavens during Earth's last perfect night. But because (as one character reminds us) "stupidity has a habit of getting its way," the wise men to whom we entrust our lives throw away all of the beauty, and consign humankind to the (literal) ash heap.

Lynne Littman's *TESTAMENT* offers the careful sort of character development that ABC could not find time for. The film's horror is intimate and highly focused. When the bombs strike, Carol Wetherly (Jane Alexander) and her three children are left alive north of San Francisco in Hamlyn. The small town has not been visibly mauled, but radiation creeps in like the plague. Thirteen hundred people die in a month.

As in *THE DAY AFTER*, the people of *TESTAMENT* are ordinary. Although they do not make political policy, they must live with its hideous after effects. Hamlyn experiences some looting and hoarding, but mostly it becomes a community of quiet heroes. One elderly man (Leon Ames) stays at his ham radio, until he

TESTAMENT

A Paramount release, 10:30, 89 mins. Directed by Lynne Littman. Produced by Jonathan Bernstein. Screenplay by John Sacret Young. Cinematographer, Steven Poster. Editor, Suzanne Pettit. Music, James Horner. Special effects, Chuck Stewart.

Carol Wetherly	.....	Jane Alexander
Tom Wetherly	.....	William Devane
Brad Wetherly	.....	Ross Harris
Mary Liz Wetherly	.....	Roxana Zal
Scottie Wetherly	.....	Lukas Haas
Hollis	.....	Philip Anglim
Fania	.....	Lilia Skala
Henry Abhart	.....	Leon Ames

drops, vainly sending messages to cities where there is no one to receive them. Brad Wetherly (Ross Harris) seems to grow up overnight, shedding the troubled adolescence that had annoyed his father. His mother observes the boy resolutely pedalling his bicycle to and fro on errands, and records her bittersweet pleasure at "the man he's become. The man he'll not live to be."

This sense of loss is beautifully explicated when young Mary Wetherly (Roxana Zal) asks her mother to describe love-making. Alexander speaks with frankness and tenderness about the joys of physical pleasure, concluding, "There can be this gift. This making of miracles. You." The daughter, her face impassive and insightful beyond its years, firmly responds, "Not for me."

As life in Hamlyn dwindles to nothing, Steven Poster's photography becomes dark and monochromatic. Sunshine gives way to rain, and people seem to merge with the shadows. Life and simple dignity are grinding to a halt.

Jane Alexander, intelligent and serenely beautiful, provides the understated passion that makes *TESTAMENT* an extraordinary experience. Never false nor melodramatic, the actress conveys the special strength of a woman who must deal with a world in which strength is nearly useless.

Neither *THE DAY AFTER* nor *TESTAMENT* takes a political stance. The films are less concerned with philosophies than with the awful vulnerability of the webs of love, friendship and family that we spin for ourselves. The cruel and useless disruption of lives is vividly painted; in bold strokes by Meyer, and with quiet conviction by Littman.

Early in *TESTAMENT*, for instance the innocent schoolchildren put on a production of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, a selection whose irony is explicit. As the play concludes, the assembled youngsters mourn for Hamelin's lost children. They chorus, "O my son, he's gone, he's dead. What have we done?"

David J. Hogan

Mythopoetic artiness and flashy direction are fine, but what the hell's it all about?

THE KEEP

A Paramount release, 12/83, 96 mins. Written and directed by Michael Mann, based on a novel by F. Paul Wilson. Executive producer, Colin M. Brewer. Cinematographer, Alex Thomson. Editor, Dov Hoening. Sound, Robin Gregory. Visual effects, Wally Vevers. Special effects, Nick Alder. Music, Tangerine Dream.

Glaeken Trismegestus..... Scott Glenn
Eva..... Alberta Watson
Woermann..... Jurgen Prochnow
Father Fonescu..... Robert Prosky

Director Michael Mann's last film, *THIEF*, undermined genre expectations by being a "caper film" that emphasized James Caan's character instead of the caper. *THE KEEP*, written and directed by Mann from F. Paul Wilson's book, likewise circumvents genre expectations, but with nowhere near the success of the earlier film.

As with *THIEF*, Mann's direction is flashy, the visuals are occasionally stunning and there is a pounding score by Tangerine Dream. However *THE KEEP*'s flashiness is strictly gratuitous—there is nothing particularly significant or meaningful about Mann's extreme close-ups, slow-motion shots and tracking shots. And like *THE EXORCIST*, Mann even resorts to cheap shocks by amplifying ordinary sounds unexpectedly loud.

These could be minor problems, if *THE KEEP* had a strong center, but the film is plagued with a particularly weak story and empty, hollow characterizations. The film opens with Woermann (Jurgen Prochnow from *DAS BOOT*) leading his troop of

Nazi soldiers through a Rumanian village. He has been ordered to occupy a position known as "The Keep," a medieval fortress that is inlaid with crosses made of nickel.

However, Woermann is a bit uneasy about his assignment, after *The Keep*'s village caretaker hints that no one has ever succeeded in spending the night at the fortress. That night, one of the soldiers is convinced that a glowing cross he sees imbedded in the wall is made of silver. In search of more treasures, he and a companion pry a block of stone loose—but they only succeed in unleashing an evil force, later to be known as Molasar.

Sensing a disturbance, Glaeken (Scott Glenn), an immortal watchdog over *The Keep*, awakens from his sleep and heads for Rumania. As played by Glenn, Glaeken is an odd chap who has lived for hundreds of years and is consumed with loneliness. Unfortunately that is really all one learns about this mysterious stranger. Mann links Glaeken to Molasar only visually, by cutting to Glenn, sitting bold upright in bed, his eyes glowing weirdly, after Molasar has been released.

Back at *The Keep*, the SS arrive in response to Woermann's request for a transfer. The SS Uberfuhrer (Gabriel Byrne) is convinced that the previous night's deaths were the work of partisans and consequently has three villagers randomly selected and shot.

Discovering a message written on

the castle walls in some ancient tongue, the local priest advises the fuhrer to send for historian Dr. Cuza (Ian McKellan), who is transferred from a concentration camp with his daughter Eva (Alberta Watson).

The conflict becomes a three-way struggle between the fanatical Nazis, Molasar and Glaeken, who opposes the monster through the use of a talisman concealed within the *The Keep*'s walls. Unfortunately, as one villager observes in an excised scene early in the film, it is hard to get concerned about whether Nazis will kill or be killed by an evil being.

Mann has the priest respond, "When darkness falls, it falls on everyone." But evil vs. evil does not have the same dramatic resonance that a good vs. evil conflict has. Glaeken is too enigmatic a character to be classified as good, except for the fact that he opposes Molasar and alone realizes the extent of the danger of the unleashed monster.

To understand what's wrong with this film, try to imagine *DRACULA* without Van Helsing; there simply is no one in *THE KEEP* to explain the background and abilities of the two supernatural beings. Apart from some expressions of mock outrage on the part of Molasar regarding wrongs against his Rumanian countrymen, we have no idea what motivates him. The biggest mistake a horror film can make is to assume that a monster is not a character.

The film tries to be poetic about Glaeken's loneliness and his need to reach out and touch Eva; however, their romance is simply ludicrous. Originally, there was an extended dialogue between Glaeken and Eva before they make love, but it was removed because it drew laughs from preview audiences. (Example: Wishing to examine a box that Glaeken has been carrying with him, Eva opens the lid as Glaeken walks in. Glaeken: What are you looking for? Eva: I was looking for you. Glaeken: Did you expect to find me in the box?)

The missing dialogue deals mostly with Glaeken's "otherness," his loneliness, his need to be wanted. With the cuts, all we are left with is Eva saying, "Why are you here?" and a love-making scene with no build-up or justification.

For the first half, the film is both effective and mysterious. Molasar,



Standing before the entrance to *THE KEEP*, Glaeken (Scott Glenn) holds Eva (Alberta Wilson).

when he first appears, looks like a dense cloud through which a pair of hands, a large red brain and two red eyes can be glimpsed. But the character of Molasar is defined only physically. He gradually takes on the appearance of a skinless man, and winds up resembling the "Swamp Thing" with red eyes and a red glow in his mouth. The film, by this time, has crossed over the boundary of the sublime into the ridiculous.

At the conclusion, images of mist swirling and gathering in *The Keep* and crosses glowing brightly, are quite striking, but the climactic confrontation between Molasar and the Nazis takes place off-screen, leaving us with short views of the aftermath.

A significant change in the film is the elimination of the original ending. The film now ends on a freeze frame of Eva looking back at *The Keep*, with her father safe, and Glaeken and Molasar dead somewhere in the bowels of the fortress. Originally, Mann and Eva go back into *The Keep* and climb down to where Glaeken lies, resting. Because of their "powerful" love, Glaeken is not destroyed.

The saddest thing about *THE KEEP* is that it had the potential and the resources to be a very good, very noteworthy film. But talented actors can make little of roles that are poorly written. And special effects have little impact when the viewer can't see the reason behind them? *THE KEEP* is a flashy, but empty experience.

Dennis Fischer



MOLASAR is the evil presence within the walls of *THE KEEP*. Michael Carter (inset) played the creature in a prosthetic suit designed by makeup effects expert Nick Malley. Optical effects by the late Wally Vevers made Molasar appear to coalesce out of the fog and mists of the dank fortress. But just who or what is Molasar? The film doesn't say.



Carpenter borrowed King's car, but doesn't know how to drive

CHRISTINE

A Columbia release, 12 83, 110 mins. In color. Directed by John Carpenter. Produced by Richard Kohrutz. Screenplay by Bill Phillips, based on the novel by Stephen King. Executive producers, Kirby McCauley, Mark Tarlov. Cinematographer, Donald M. Morgan. Editor, Marion Rothman. Music, John Carpenter, Alan Howarth.

Arnie Cunningham Keith Gordon
Dennis Guilder John Stockwell
Leigh Cabot Alexandra Paul
Will Darnell Robert Prosky
Rudolph Junkins Harry Dean Stanton

Stephen King's entertaining novel (his pulpier and most unabashedly silly) should have been sure-fire movie material. The book features a very tuff car, lots of rock 'n roll lyrics and appealing teenagers who struggle against the evil that threatens to destroy them. Director John Carpenter—fresh from being burned by his aborted attempt to film King's *Firestarter*—seemed a logical choice to tackle *Christine*. If nothing else, King's shaggy sedan story would assure Carpenter of a box-office hit and repair some of the damage done by the flop of *THE THING*.

Unfortunately what sinks *CHRISTINE* is the very problem that shot down *THE THING* and *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*: Carpenter's obliviousness to the need for empathetic characters. *CHRISTINE*'s male leads—Keith Gordon and John Stockwell—are talented actors undercut by their director.

As the perennial loser Arnie Cunningham, Gordon is physically right. He's small, dark and intense—a frustrated romantic trapped in an uncaring world. He looks like someone who'd be seduced by an evil 20-year-old Plymouth.

He gains new assurances as he restores Christine to her former glory, and we wait for him to begin to struggle as the car's hold becomes stronger and more pernicious. But Arnie doesn't struggle. The narrative doesn't allow him any time to resist. Arnie becomes Joe Cool in a wink and a howling demon minutes later. There is no dramatic tension; Arnie just changes.

Because we do not observe the boy's fight to remain as he is (as King allowed us to do), Arnie is not a sympathetic victim but just a disagreeable brute who cuffs his new girlfriend (Alexandra Paul), roughs up his dad and litters the highway with beer cans. Characters talk about how much Arnie has changed, but the metamorphosis evolves too quickly to be as disturbing as it might have been.

A case in point is the Thanksgiving scene. As in the book, Arnie's friend Dennis (Stockwell) has been injured playing football and is spending the holiday in the hospital. In the novel, Arnie's visit is dramatic and poignant. The boy has owned the car for some time, and he knows it's corrupt-

ing him—taking over his personality. Though overmatched, Arnie still struggles. We know he has no chance to prevail, but in his friend's hospital room, over beer shared by candlelight, the real Arnie is in evidence one last time. He's sweet and concerned about his injured buddy; he makes jokes and wishes Dennis well. When he leaves, we sadly say goodbye to the Arnie whom we have come to know and like.

As interpreted by Carpenter and Phillips, the scene is a dramatic zero. It's Bad Arnie that's come to visit. When the boy leaves the room, we are neither upset nor moved, but merely relieved. There is no emotional hook to the scene, or to Arnie's character. He just becomes a pain in the ass. I began to look forward to the kid's inevitable comeuppance.

But even that is a disappointment. The novel works the reader into a lather by focusing on the agony of Dennis' infirmities and how his condition may prevent him from destroying the car and saving himself and the girl. Carpenter barely hints at this, so the denouement is perfunctory and wearily inevitable.

The talented supporting cast also gets a raw deal. For a few minutes it appears as though Harry Dean Stanton might score big as a police detective, but the role is frustratingly small. Only Robert Prosky (as a porcine garage owner) and Roberts Blossom (as the car's grungy, misanthropic original owner) register strongly.

On a technical level, though, *CHRISTINE* is splendid. A highly skilled visual storyteller, Carpenter creates arresting images: A series of tremendous explosions at a dark service station is particularly exciting and well-staged. Roy Arbogast's mechanical effects—notably the car's ability to magically pop out its dents and bashes—are clever and effective.

That John Carpenter has become a problematic director is both ironic and deeply disappointing. His early genre films—*DARK STAR*, *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*, *HALLOWEEN*—are successful because their rousing stories and energetic visual styles are complemented with amusing, often unexpected characterizations.

Carpenter's budgets have grown, but his development as an artist has stalled. Indeed, he even seems to be devolving. *CHRISTINE* is fun, I suppose, but it's also an empty, gimmick-filled movie. Neither Donald M. Morgan's smoothly sinister photography nor the pounding rock 'n roll score can hide the film's triviality. Carpenter's slick style goes for naught because, as the garage owner reminds Arnie early in the story, "You can't polish a turd." **David J. Hogan**



Effects man Roy Arbogast was in charge of the film's amazing automotive star

The three major effects set-pieces of *CHRISTINE* were the "show me" scene, in which "Christine" rebuilds herself after being trashed by Arnie's enemies; the "Moochie" scene, in which the car corners one of the punks in a narrow alley and shears its sides off to get him; and the exploding gas station, which concludes with the Fury, bathed in flames, pursuing another teenager down a deserted highway.

These sequences are all "physical effects," accomplished without trick photography by Roy Arbogast and a nine-person crew, working closely with director John Carpenter and director of photography Donald M. Morgan. For the spectacular gas station explosion, a life-size gas station had to be built and set afire.

"*CHRISTINE* involved a lot of things like explosions and fires and car

crashes, which are not the types of things I normally seek out," said Arbogast, whose other films include *JAWS*, *JAWS II*, *CAVEMAN* and *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN*. "I'll do them if a script calls for them, but I don't specialize in them. I like to do real 'busy' shows, with a lot of complicated or elaborate effects—the bigger the better. I like to do as much stuff as we possibly can—to give the audience a show. *CHRISTINE* offered a variety there."

Since most of Arbogast's effects were being filmed by the main unit during principal photography, his effects crew had to ready two effects rigs of the car for most scenes.

"We tried to set up for two cars, in case we blew the gag or something went wrong, so there wouldn't be a delay," said Arbogast. "When you're dealing with a first unit crew, and not miniatures at a studio, it's tough. You don't want to have to shut down the company for hours, and any delay on an effects set-up will do that."

"We pulled off the whole gas station scene in one night," added Arbogast. "We shot the various set-ups one after the other. I remember the last thing we shot was done about 4 a.m., so we finished just under the wire."

For the car's slow, screeching charge down an alley, ripping its sides apart as it moves toward "Moochie," Morgan set up four cameras at key angles (including directly overhead) to record the shot, while Arbogast's crew mounted an apparatus underneath the car, which pulled it the length of the alley by a metal cable.

"What you saw was basically what really happened," said Arbogast. "We weakened the metal by acid-washing it, so it would peel back, but the alley walls were poured concrete that had hardened."

Arbogast (r) and fire-suited crew with the flaming "Christine."





Effects supervisor Roy Arbogast (center) presides over a "Christine" crash.

Arbogast had more direct control over the scenes of "Christine" repairing herself, because the setting was a garage interior, immune to the vagaries of weather. The effects crew built flexible, polyurethane auto body panels and fenders, and mounted them on a collapsible frame, which was straightened to create the impression of damage miraculously being undone. Smaller dents were "erased" by having a technician pull straps on the back of a polyurethane panel, then release them.

Despite Arbogast's obvious mastery of his assignment for CHRISTINE, the unpredictable did occur. The movie's set designer, Cloudia, recalls, "When the car chases after the kid at the gas station, it had to shoot through a wall of flames with a stunt driver at the wheel. Three times, as it came through, it stalled—because there was no oxygen for the engine. And all that time, the driver was trapped inside."

Art director Dan Lomino, who held the same job on CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND and FAST

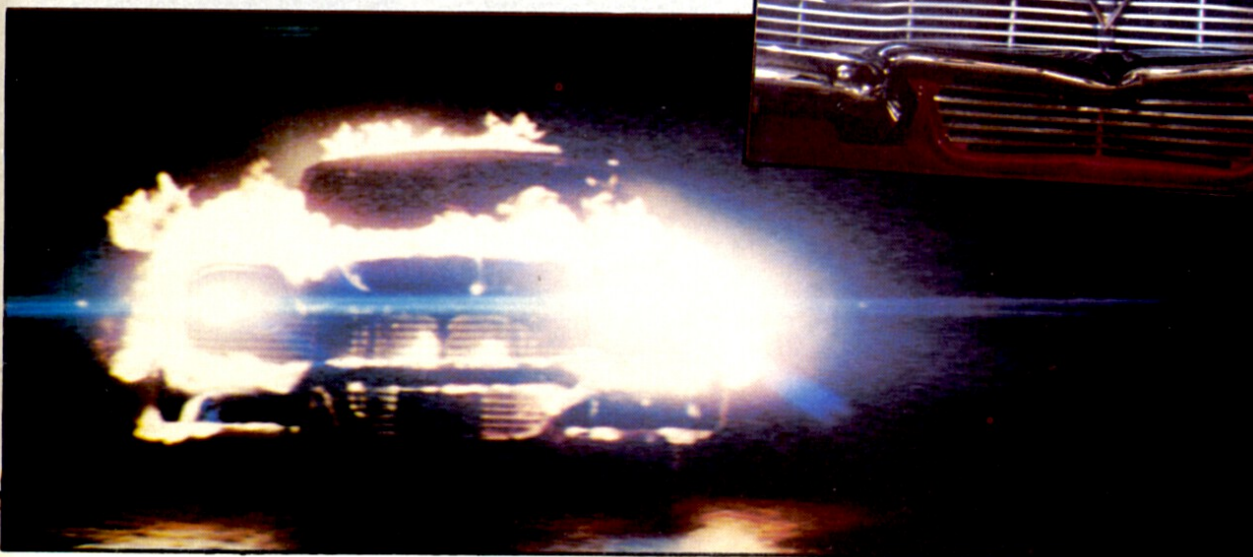
TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH, hastens to add that the driver was wearing a flame retardant suit and had a fire extinguisher with him in the front seat. There were no mishaps on the CHRISTINE set.

CHRISTINE is Arbogast's third teaming with Carpenter, and he has since signed for a fourth Carpenter feature, Columbia's STAR MAN. Their previous collaborations were ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK and THE THING, the latter of which earned Carpenter a lot of criticism for its grotesque effects.

"John never said anything to me about it, but I know the critical knocks he took for THE THING had to have hurt," said the soft-spoken Arbogast. "I had problems with the finished film dramatically, but not because of its violence.

"That's why I was so impressed with CHRISTINE when I saw the first cut," added Arbogast. "For the first 45 minutes, it's all character development. There's no special effects at all. It really shows how John has developed."

Bill Kelley



Left: Flaming from the garage explosion, "Christine" just keeps going. Inset: The car repairs itself. The scene was filmed using a special, collapsible car frame, with body parts molded of polyurethane. When shown in reverse, the car appears to uncollapse.

Script cliches sidetrack yet another trip to Amityville

AMITYVILLE 3-D

An Orion release, 11 83, 105 mins. Directed by Richard Fleischer. Screenplay by William Wales. Produced by Stephen F. Kesten. Cinematographer, Fred Schuler. Editor, Frank J. Urioste. Music, Howard Blake. Special effects, Michael Wood.

John Baxter Tony Roberts
Melanie Candy Clark
Nancy Baxter Tess Harper
Elliot West Robert Joy
Harold Caswell John Beal

Richard Fleischer's standard haunted house tale is not so much another sequel to *THE AMITYVILLE HORROR* (an item its makers grudgingly admit) as it is an alternate take of *POLTERGEIST*. As in Tobe Hooper's spooker, it's the story of a suburban house overrun—for ambiguous reasons—by a corps of ill-intentioned spirits. They steal a daughter and use her as bait to trap the rest of the family, or any one they can get their ghostly hands on.

Of course, they are really fronting for a greater, more evil creature, who would like to suck the whole family straight to Hell. This Grand Demon even looks like the Evil from *POLTERGEIST*—except that he's put on a little weight and growls more.

The similarity between *AMITYVILLE 3-D* and *POLTERGEIST* is not surprising, since the special effects are done by some of the same people. As in most modern horror films, the "terror" is created through the use of effects, rather than the implied, more frightening, auras of evil that pervade great works such as *DEAD OF NIGHT* or *PSYCHO*. In horror movies nowadays, you know pretty much what to expect; you just wait until they spring it.

But that's not a surprise—people obviously enjoy familiarity, or else they wouldn't have taken this third trip to Amityville.

It didn't seem to matter to Dino DeLaurentis and producer Stephen F. Kester that they didn't own the rights to the *AMITYVILLE* story; they knew a potential gold mine when they smelled one.

Even the disclaimer they were forced to tack on to the final print of the ads and posters ("not a sequel to *THE AMITYVILLE HORROR* or *AMITYVILLE II*") didn't dissuade them. They built their own haunted house, with the same Jack O'Lantern facade and hired the same ghouls to live in it.

But these shrewd businessmen understood that even moviegoers have their limits and may not be tricked into seeing the third dog in the *AMITYVILLE* triumverate. Enter 3-D.

Let's hope *this* is truly the end.

Patrick Curren



The Amityville Demon pulls psychic researcher Robert Joy down a well. The creature was designed by John Caglione (above), who is shown sculpting the demon, from a cast of its appearance in the original film.

Special effects in AMITYVILLE 3-D enliven stock cliches

The only bright spots in the latest excursion to Amityville are the special effects of Gary Platek and the makeup work of John Caglione. Platek, formerly of ILM, provided floating spirits, a miniature well and a swarm of houseflies. Caglione, a former protegee of Dick Smith, designed the film's demon, and dispatched its victims.

Platek was working on a skeletal armature for Steven Spielberg's *GREMLINS* when he received a call from director Richard Fleischer to work on the film. Platek, who also worked on *POLTERGEIST*, used the *AMITYVILLE 3-D* assignment to start his own effects house, JEX FX, located in San Rafael, California.

Caglione's most challenging task was to sculpt the film's demon, which pops out of a well in the movie's biggest shock. "It's the largest sculpture I've done," said Caglione, whose makeup credits include *ZELIG* and the previous *AMITYVILLE* outing.

"The arms, torso and head were all done separately," said Caglione. "They had to blend together very carefully because the creature has no hair—it's all skin. The seams blend into the wrinkles." The makeup artist donned the latex suit to play the creature in the film himself.

Caglione, who is based out of New York, hired David Smith to mechanize the demon. "When the thing snarls, the upper and lower lips would pull back," said Caglione. "The eyelids could open and close, and the brows frown. It had a number of expressions, but they cut most of it out."

Surprisingly, what proved most difficult for Caglione was not working within the technical confines set by the 3-D process, but simply doing some of the more standard effects called for by the script.

"In one scene involving a fly

attack, we had to try several different methods to get the scene to work right," he said. "I had to smear fly sex hormones all over the actor. The stuff smells like a dog died. It keeps people away, but it's supposed to attract the flies."

In addition to the fact that the insects wouldn't cooperate, the use of live flies was causing terrible convergence and exposure problems, so director Richard Fleischer called in Platek to come up with a solution. The answer was an offshoot of the method ILM uses to photograph space explosions—by stationing the camera underneath and shooting straight up. Platek kept the basic idea, but reversed things a little.

"What we wound up doing was taking the Arrivision camera and pointing it straight down from about 20 feet in the air," said Platek. "Then we built a chute and dropped painted styrofoam pellets next to the lens and lit them so they would vanish just before they hit the ground. When we reversed this and matted it into the picture, the pellets floated and swirled toward the lens, just like flies."

Starting work in March, 1983, Platek was originally scheduled to do only about ten effects shots and was given a budget of \$250,000. By the time he finished the film, Platek had worked on 32 shots and his budget doubled.

"The first effect we did that appears in the movie was the well that the two girls see when they go down into the basement," he said. "We designed and shot that as a miniature because it gave us more control over the effect of its depth. Another interesting shot is the spirit of Tony Robert's daughter. In the scene where she comes back from the dead, it's partially a laser effect shot live, augmented by rear projection and motion control."

Platek's ingenuity saved time and

effort working in 3-D. Although he had an Arrivision 3-D camera, most of his work was filmed with a standard non-3-D camera.

"We cut a matte that matched the Arrivision 3-D double frame size and just put it in the camera," said Platek. "That way, we could shoot one of the 3-D images, rewind it, reposition the matte, then shoot the other image. Using black and white film, which can be processed quickly, we could shoot a test and see if it worked within a few hours."

Although Platek is happy with his work on the film, he's not eager to do any more assignments in 3-D.

"3-D films suck," he said, bluntly. "There's no way you can control how they're projected. I think we did very well with our effects, but when I went to see the film at a local theater, it didn't look nearly as good as when we projected them at our studio in San Rafael. I was very disappointed."

Michael Mayo/Randy Palmer

Real flies and styrofoam chips were used to film John Harken's demise.



Promise your audience anything, but give them special effects

BRAINSTORM

A MGM-UA release, 9 83, 103 mins. Produced and directed by Douglas Trumbull. Screenplay by Robert Stitzel and Philip Frank Messina; story by Joel Rubin. Executive producer, Joel L. Freedman. Cinematographer, Richard Yuricich. Music, Howard Shore. Editors, Edward Warschilka, Freeman Davies. Visual effects supervisor, Alison Yerva.

Michael Brace Christopher Walken
 Karen Brace Natalie Wood
 Lillian Reynolds Louise Fletcher
 Alex Terson Cliff Robertson
 Gordy Forbes Jordan Christopher

If you remember a 1937 film called SARATOGA, it's because Jean Harlow died in the middle of production. Similarly, in the unlikely event that anyone remembers Douglas Trumbull's BRAINSTORM years hence, it will be because of the tragic death of its leading lady, Natalie Wood. There's no other reason for the film to stick in one's mind.

Though BRAINSTORM aspires to profundity, its muddled narrative and coldly-pretty visual effects arouse only confusion and frustration. For human drama, stick with the story of Trumbull's struggle to complete the picture following Wood's death; the film itself is strictly anti-climactic.

Bruce Joel Rubin's intriguing story proposes that scientists at a research conglomerate (motto: "Research for a Better Tomorrow") have invented a recording device which captures the sight, sound, touch, taste and smell of any act or experience.

When the device is demonstrated for the company's board of directors, Trumbull's camera takes us on invigorating, wide-angle glides over the Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls,



Douglas Trumbull directs Christopher Walken and Natalie Wood in BRAINSTORM.

and for a giddy ride on a roller coaster. The director's fondness for movement and panorama is pleasingly apparent. "Adults Only" applications are suggested by an amusing encounter with a half-dressed young lovely. In the early going, then, BRAINSTORM is good fun.

Problems arise when the script by Robert Stitzel and Philip Frank Messina goes off in search of Plot Conflict. When the military comes snooping because of the device's tactical applications (particularly in brainwashing), the inventors, Reynolds (Louise Fletcher) and Brace (Christopher Walken), bellow their outrage.

So far, so familiar, but contrivance

wins the day when the conglomerate—for some unfathomable and unexplained reason—acquiesces to the military's demands and turns the device over to the Pentagon. In essence, the company happily foregoes millions or even billions of dollars in commercial revenue in order to toady up to big brass.

Brace discovers the nasty use to which his invention is being put when he plays just a smidgen of a tape marked "Psychotic Episode: TOXIC," and nearly loses his mind. The sequence is a shocker, but why is this tape objective and not subjective like the others?

At any rate, Brace resolves to sub-

vert the military's plans. He is also eager to play a classified recording of the heart attack and death of a fellow employee. On top of all this, our hero has his hands full trying to salvage his marriage to the company's marketing honcho (Natalie Wood).

Trumbull's contrivance and Walken's strident, hyperventilated performance would have been tolerable if the film had followed through on its intentions. On the other hand, BRAINSTORM is a not-bad conspiracy story that escalates into a chase thriller near its conclusion. The film also plays with some very provocative philosophical issues, notably our curiosity about the nature of death.

Trumbull builds up a fair amount of interest in the following questions: Can Brace save his marriage? Will the bad guys capture him before he can stop the military and play the death tape? What is on the tape? What is the shape of death? The conclusion, which satisfactorily only answers the first question, is like a rude slap in the face. Almost nothing is resolved.

Brace's big blow against the conglomerate is some remote-controlled vandalism which looks as though it could be cleaned up in two days. The frantic chase element is totally forgotten, and the shape of death is, well, prosaic.

Through the film, Trumbull's special effects are interesting, but inappropriate. An insistence on strict geometric shapes and patterns may be pretty, but hardly suggests the essence of the human intellect and emotions.

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Giant rat feature plays like an urban western

OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

A Warner Bros. release, 11 83, 88 mins. Directed by George Pan Cosmatos. Screenplay by Brian Taggart. Produced by Claude Heroux. Executive producer, Pierre David. Cinematographer, René Verzier. Editor, Robert Silvi. Music, Ken Wamburg. Special makeup effects, Stephan Dupuis.

Bart Hughes Peter Weller
 Lorrie Wells Jennifer Dale
 Eliot Riverton Lawrence Dane
 James Hall Kenneth Welsh
 Cleo Louis Del Grande

Think you've got problems? Consider the plight of rising young executive Bart Hughes (Peter Weller, Diane Keaton's love interest in SHOOT THE MOON) in OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN, who is sweating out a possible promotion at his trust company while engaged in a heated battle with a vexatious rat that has invaded his refurbished New York brownstone.

This isn't your standard, cheese-in-the-mouse-trap-type rodent, mind you, but a super-intelligent strain of the species, singularly dedicated to chewing through everything—and everyone—in its path. As adapted by Brian Taggart from Chauncey Parker

III's novel, *The Visitor*, director George P. Cosmatos (lately of the lame CASSANDRA CROSSING) serves up a double-edged rat race that plays like an urban western. The brownstone ain't big enough for the two of 'em, so it's up to Weller to do what a man's gotta do: find a way to terminate the fuzzy scavenger before his sexy-poo wife (ex-Playmate Shannon Tweed, in various stages of undress) and son return from vacation.

Rats, Weller learns from library research, can burrow their way through surfaces as hard as concrete and steel and have been known to feast upon their own offspring. Their only contribution to the world, he informs the repulsed guests at a business dinner, is famine, sickness and death (at which point the film begins to overstate its case—it's not as if the audience is pro-rat, after all).

In short order, Weller's dishwasher hose gets bitten through, his dry-goods cupboard is destroyed, his cat is mutilated, his blueprints are shredded beyond recognition and, one morn-

ing, his maniacally masticating boarder greets him from inside the toilet bowl. Does he move out or seek help from a strong-armed friend? No. Silently-suffering Weller won't even confide in his boss when his preoccupation with his unwelcome guest starts to affect his job performance.

We're supposed to see Weller as a proud and determined man, but he comes off more as irrational and hard-headed. Additionally, the script's point of view is vague: Weller is meant to be a sympathetic hero, but the rat literally runs all over him, outsmarting him at every turn and making him look the fool, especially when he catches his hand in a mini-bear trap intended for Mighty Mouse.

At wit's end, Weller goes for broke, buying a ton of rodent-killer paraphernalia and forcing his quarry into a showdown that turns into an all-out war. (The sight of the unshaven Weller in his rubber knee-high boots, padded jacket and gloves, and coal miner's light cap, standing at the top of the basement stairs at "high noon," is one of the film's precious few



Peter Weller, outsmarted by a rat.

moments of dark humor.) In his quest to flatten the over-sized critter with a nail-embedded baseball bat, our modern gladiator all but destroys his beautiful home. That's entertainment?

WELLARD had a certain redeeming camp value (the sight of Ernest Borgnine, being devoured by rats, was artistic justice, after all), but OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN chokes on its deadly earnestness. Weller's victory is an ugly, hollow one, rendering the movie ultimately pointless. Couldn't any reasonably determined individ-

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*A rock video
paen to the
horror genre,
but few thrills*

THRILLER

MTV Epic Records Vestron Video release, 12 83, 14 mins. Directed by John Landis. Produced by George Folsey, Jr., Michael Jackson and John Landis. Screenplay by John Landis, Michael Jackson. Make-up effects, Rick Baker and EFX Inc. Cinematographer, Robert Paynter. Editor, Malcolm Campbell. George Folsey, Jr. Art director, Charles Hughes. Choreography, Michael Jackson, Michael Peters. "Creepy" music, Elmer Bernstein. "Thriller" written by Rod Temperton, performed by Michael Jackson, featuring "Rap" by Vincent Price.

Michael..... Michael Jackson
Girl..... Ola Ray



Singer Michael Jackson surrounded by the ghouls designed by Oscar-winning makeup artist Rick Baker for THRILLER.

A thriller? No, but this homage-to-horror-films video succeeds in its own modest way.

Following a disclaimer which asserts Michael Jackson's disbelief in the occult, director John Landis plunges right into well-trodden ground: Their car out of gas in a dark forest, a young couple profess their love via a ring; the boy (Jackson) confesses his affliction via the moon and suddenly turns into a werewolf.

It all turns out to be a movie, with "another" Michael Jackson watching his beastly self on the theater screen, girlfriend at his side. Scared, she leaves, and he follows, singing "Thriller" to her along the dark, wet streets.

This is really where the video should begin. Jackson's disclaimer is ludicrous in its superfluousness, and the much-hyped transformation falls flat. Like Vincent Price's later "rap," it seems to be tacked-on.

Meanwhile, back on the street, Jackson gently teases his girl with movie-monsterdom lyrics. But soon

the joke's on both of them, with the arrival of zombies. The creatures stalk—and they strut, with Jackson turning into a ghoul himself and leading them in an energetic dance routine.

It works. Nothing special happens in the dancing—it's basically Jackson's "Beat It" rock video without the gangs—but there's good make-up and good moves on display.

Also, well filmed is the assault by a mob of zombies on the girl in an abandoned house. She covers within. They approach. Jackson, as the lead ghoul, reaches out for her, but suddenly he transforms back to his "good" side—the scene quickly reverting back to middle-class safety.

Jackson comforts his girl, and the two head out. He spins to face the camera, which freezes on his devilishly wide-eyed grin and the green,

werewolf-like eyes that appeared in the transformation scene.

Predictable? Yes—even trite. But it's a look which instantly recreates Jackson's ghoulish persona, his alter ego, which plays against the the All-American-boy image Jackson used throughout the video. The scene parallels the difference between gentle Michael Jackson the person and Michael Jackson the struttin' rocker.

Jackson's acting and his thin face, ideal for Rick Baker's ghoulish magic, stand out in this otherwise mundane homage. For THRILLER doesn't successfully spoof like YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN or refine like RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. But then, it is not a film.

And it should not take an Academy Award and the ensuing recognition away from any of the country's independent filmmakers. THRILLER

had a Los Angeles theatrical run as a short subject to qualify for an Oscar nomination, before premiering December 2 on MTV. A subsequent airing on NBC-TV's FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEOS on December 23 reached a mass audience.

The Academy Awards, though fraught with gross misjudgments and standing on the thin foundation of artistic competition, will probably not choose THRILLER. And will probably have the sense to disqualify all music videos because of their record sales-oriented inceptions. The video animal should maintain its own territory.

And as one such beast, THRILLER succeeds. The song and video may pale next to the others from the album, but it still delivers as light-hearted entertainment.

Allen Malmquist

BRAINSTORM

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Visualization of shards of memory is cleverly accomplished with whirling spheres that recall M. C. Escher, but Trumbull's kaleidoscopic approach is otherwise cold and passionless.

Absurd and uncalled-for Christian imagery renders the final effects sequence almost laughable. Because Trumbull's notion of the after life looks like an electronic theme park, the film's final revelation is not a brainstorm at all, but just a mundane idea that is badly executed.

The film is only partially successful in engaging us on a character level. Walken is believable as a vociferous eccentric, but isn't very likable, a fatal flaw in a protagonist for whom we are supposed to cheer. Cliff Robertson is fine (as always) in a thankless role as Brace's boss.

But the heart and warmth of BRAINSTORM is conveyed by Louise Fletcher and Natalie Wood. Fletcher is one of those rare talents

who can create a human being from gesture and intonation. As written, her role as the irascible project head is almost stereotypical, but the actress neatly sidesteps cliché. Middle-aged-pretty, her eyes gleaming with wit and intelligence, Fletcher turns in the film's most involving performance.

Inevitably, discussion of BRAINSTORM will focus on Natalie Wood. Her role is not particularly well-written, but it is well-played. A scene in which she laughs with Walken beneath the bedcovers bursts with charm and spontaneity. At 43, Wood glowed; she may never have been treated more kindly by a movie camera. Woods' fans will not be disappointed.

However, the same cannot be said of Trumbull's followers, or lovers of good science fiction or good drama. The great irony of BRAINSTORM is not the death of its leading lady, but that the director labored so fervently to give birth to so very little.

David J. Hogan

OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

continued from page 59

ual, his strength fueled by fear and blind reason, manage to lay out an animal with a spiked bat?

Conceptual emptiness aside, Cosmatos does achieve reasonable success on a certain visceral level, striking an impressive balance between the subtle and the graphic. Rene Verzier's assured photography introduces us to Super Rat via close-ups: an ear listening for Weller's actions, his teeth bared in readiness, a paw sliding across a glass coffee table, his elongated tail slithering just out of camera range.

When the rat crawls into Weller's bed one night, all we need to see is that lump moving beneath the sheets to imagine the unholy terror that it represents—an example of the film's adroit use of psychological suspense.

Less effective are the attack scenes themselves, which are often so dimly lit that you can't tell if what you're seeing munching on Weller is a

trained animal, an articulated puppet or a fur piece mounted with Super Glue. Also, because we witness only fleeting glimpses of the hairy aggressor, it is never precisely determined just how large it is. We are given a clever visual clue when, fleeing the advancing rat from the cellar, Weller closes the door on it, and we see its sizeable shadow beneath it, clawing in frustration at the barricade. But in other scenes its proportions don't seem nearly as intimidating, leading us to wonder exactly what Weller is up against.

Weller works hard in a physically demanding role, but since his character has no shading or warmth, we do little beyond empathize with his situation. Considering his co-star's incessant upstaging, however, he holds his own quite respectably.

One has to laugh, however, at the disclaimer that ends the final credits ("the welfare of the animals used was considered throughout...").

Kyle Counts

FILM RATINGS

AMAZONS

Directed by Paul Michael Glaser. ABC Films ABC-TV, 1/84, 100 mins. With: Madeline Stowe, Jack Scalia, Jennifer Warren, Stella Stevens.

Badly written fantasy—about a centuries-old secret female cult murderously subverting male-dominated society—made bearable, even entertaining, by Paul Michael Glaser's vivid, stylish direction. ● **BK**

ANGEL

Directed by Robert Vincent O'Neil. New World, 1/84, 92 minutes. With: Cliff Gorman, Susan Tyrell, Dick Shawn, Rory Calhoun, John Diehl, Donna Wilkes.

This "Jack the Ripper" update, with Hollywood Boulevard substituting for Soho, is being promoted by distributor New World Pictures as an expose of teen prostitution. Diehl is the standard mad slasher, menacing Wilkes as the titular high-school hooker. Film is tepid as horror, but solidly melodramatic thanks to sure characterizations and a fine supporting cast. Especially good are Shawn as an aging transvestite and Calhoun as a has-been western star who saves the day. ●● **FSC**

AUTOMAN

With: Chuck Wagner, Desi Arnaz, Jr., Robert Lansing.

A TRON rip-off, right down to having an animated companion named Cursor (in TRON it was the Bit). Actually, it's the reverse of TRON—zapping an electronic game character off the computer screen into the real world. The 90-minute pilot made Desi Arnaz, Jr. seem like a dork, which may spell death to the series. But the computer-generated animation and 90-degree video game turns lent visual interest to what is basically THE GREATEST AMERICAN HERO for tiny tots. ● **JPH**

CITY OF THE WALKING DEAD

Directed by Umberto Lenzi. 21st Century, 11/83, 90 minutes. With: Mel Ferrer, Hugo Stiglitz, Laura Trotter.

Above-average 1981 Italian-Spanish co-production in the "va gotta shoot 'em in the head" subgenre, though marred by grainy photography and washed-out color. A band of bloodthirsty zombies leap from a plane as it lands. Within minutes, they wipe out the airport and descend on the city. A lame attempt by the military (led by Mel Ferrer) fails. For gore fans and completists. ● **DRS**

CLASSIC CREATURES: RETURN OF THE JEDI

Directed by Robert Guenette. CBS-TV, 11/83, 50 mins. With: Carrie Fisher, Billy Dee Williams.

If 20/20 can devote an hour to YENTL, who can complain if CBS gives equal time to RETURN OF THE JEDI? There were generous clips from Lucas' film and interesting behind-the-scenes shots, illustrating the technology of bringing monsters to the screen: live-action and stop

FILM TITLE	●●●●			●●●●			●●			●			○		
	MUST SEE			EXCELLENT			GOOD			MEDIocre			WORTHLESS		
	FSC	DJH	JPH	MJK	BK	MM	DS								
AMITYVILLE 3-D / Richard Fleischer Orion, 11/83, 85 mins.	●		○	●●	●		●								
AUTOMAN / Lee H. Katzin, others ABC-TV series, 1/84, 50 minute episodes	○	○	●	○	○	○									
BRAINSTORM / Douglas Trumbull MGM/UA, 9/83, 103 mins.	●●●	●	○	●●●	●	●●	●●								
CHRISTINE / John Carpenter Columbia, 12/83, 111 mins.	●	●	○	●●	●●	●●	●								
CUJO / Lewis Teague Warner Bros, 8/83, 97 mins.	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●●	○		●								
THE DAY AFTER / Nicholas Meyer ABC-TV, 11/83, 125 mins.	●	●●●●	●	●●	●●	●	●								
THE DEAD ZONE / David Cronenberg Paramount, 10/83, 103 mins.	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●								
DEAL OF THE CENTURY / William Friedkin Warner Bros, 10/83, 98 mins.	○			●●	●		●								
FIRE AND ICE / Ralph Bakshi 20th Century-Fox, 10/83, 81 mins.				●●	○	●									
KOYAANISQATSI / Godfrey Reggio Island Alive/New Cinema, 5/83, 87 mins.	●●●●	●●		●●	●●	●●●●									
THE KEEP / Michael Mann Paramount, 12/83, 96 mins.	●●●●	●	○	●●	●	●●●	●								
LIQUID SKY / Slava Tsukerman Z Films, 5/83, 112 mins.	○	●●		●	●		○								
METALSTORM / Charles Band Universal, 8/83, 83 mins. In 3-D	●		○	●	○	●●									
MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL / Burny Mattinson, Buena-Vista, 12/83, 26 mins.	●				●●		●●●								
NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN / Irvin Kershner Warner Bros, 10/83, 137 mins.	●●	●●●		●●●	●●●	●	●●								
NIGHT OF THE ZOMBIES / Vincent Dawn Motion Picture Marketing, 10/83, 99 mins.				○	○		○								
NIGHTMARES / Joseph Sargent Universal, 9/83, 99 mins.	○	●●	○		●										
PROTOTYPE / David Greene CBS-TV, 12/83, 95 mins.	●●		●●●		●●●										
THE RESCUERS / Wolfgang Reitherman Buena Vista, 12/83 (re-rel), 76 mins.	●●		●●●●		●●		●●●								
SPLASH / Ron Howard Buena Vista, 3/84, 111 mins.	●●●●			●●●		●●●●									
STRANGE INVADERS / Michael Laughlin Orion, 8/83, 94 mins.	●●	●●●	●●		●●	●●	●●●								
TESTAMENT / Lynne Littman Paramount, 11/83, 90 mins.	●●	●●●●			●●		●●●								
THRILLER / John Landis MTV Epic Records, 12/83, 14 mins.	●	●●	●●●●	●●	○	●●	●●●								
WAVELENGTH / Michael Gray New World, 8/83, 93 mins.	●●●●	●●		●●											
YOR, THE HUNTER FROM THE FUTURE / Anthony M. Dawson, Columbia, 8/83, 88 mins.	○		●	●	○										
ZELIG / Woody Allen Orion, 8/83, 78 mins.	●●	●●●	●●●		●●	●●●●	●●								

FSC / Frederick S. Clarke DJH / David J. Hogan JPH / Judith P. Harris MJK / Michael J. Kaplan
BK / Bill Kelley MM / Mike Mayo DS / Dan Scapperotti

motion puppets, life-size mechanical props, men-in-suits and recent developments in cable mechanisms. Pretty basic stuff for experts, but nevertheless, well done. ●●● **JPH**

DEATHSTALKER

Directed by John Watson. New World Millennium, 11/83, 89 mins. With: Richard Hill, Bernard Erhard, Barbi Benton.

Scriptwriter Howard Cohen's feeble attempts at humor give this unpleasant, misogynist Sword & Sorcery story what little spice or moments of enjoyment it has. Everything is borrowed from other films and done a tenth as well. ○ **Dennis K. Fischer**

DR. WHO: THE FIVE DOCTORS

Directed by Peter Moffat. PBS-TV, 11/83, 90 minutes. With: Peter Davidson, John Pertwee, Patrick Troughton, Richard Hurndall, Tom Baker.

A 20th anniversary celebration, featuring all five of the actors who have played the title role. A great deal of time is wasted reintroducing the Doctors and many of the companions and villains, including the Daleks, Cyberman and the Raston Robot. A show that has survived 20 years, spawned two theatrical films and which still has international audiences and active fan clubs surely deserved better. ● **JPH**

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

Directed by Douglas Hickox. Home Box Office Ss Weintraub Prod, 10/83, 105 mins. With: Ian Richardson, Donald Churchill, Denholm Elliott.

Theatrically unreleased bore from the director of THEATER OF BLOOD. Ian Richardson's summer stock-level portrayal of Holmes is its worst failing, but there is lots more to dislike: Donald Churchill's overblown Watson, the free variance from Conan Doyle's text, the gratuitous mayhem and awful special effects. Only the production design of this medium-budget British film is strong. ● **BK**

HOUSE OF LONG SHADOWS

Directed by Peter Walker. Cannon Films, 7/83. With: Desi Arnaz, Jr., Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, John Carradine.

Desi Arnaz, Jr.'s publisher bet him that he can't write a gothic novel in 24 hours. Sending him to an "abandoned" mansion for atmosphere, he soon discovers that he happened on homecoming night for the tragic Grisborne family. Horror stars all chew the scenery enjoyably in this whimsical retelling of Earl Derr Biggers' venerable mystery. *Seven Keys to Baldpate*. ●●● **Dennis K. Fischer**

MORTUARY

Directed by Howard Avedis. Film Ventures, 1/84, 91 mins. With: Mary McDonough, David Wallace, Lynda Day George, Christopher George.

A dull, routine mad-killer flick, made in 1981 and only now surfacing. The wacko son of a mortician, with an Oedipus complex, knocks off most of the cast, including daddy (Christopher George), while protecting his crazy "dead" mother. Poor makeup effects further diminish any interest the film could have had. ● **DS**

PROTOTYPE

With: Christopher Plummer, David Morse, Frances Sternhagen.

Ghosts of "serious" robot dramas of the past danced in my head anticipating this. I could visualize the obligatory scene in which the android is injured and the mechanics beneath the "skin" are revealed. But writers Richard Levinson and William Link eschewed tradition, breathing fresh life into a genre overused on high tech. It's a thoughtful drama on the purposes of technology. What do you do with the ultimate tool once you have worked out all the bugs? Who decides? ●●● **JPH**

SPLASH

With: Tom Hanks, Daryl Hannah.

The surprise for 1984. Funny, touching, sexy and intelligent reworking of Man-meets-Mermaid theme manages to be a terrific film for both children and adults. Shows the success of NIGHTSHIFT was no fluke, and that director Ron Howard just may be the successor to Spielberg and Lucas in the '80s. ●●●● **MM**

WARRIORS OF THE WASTELAND

Directed by Enzo G. Castellari. New Line Cinema, 1/84, 92 mins. With: Fred Williamson, Timothy Brent, Anna Kanakis.

An Italian rip-off of ROAD WARRIOR, with none of the excitement. The car chases seem to zip along at 15 mph, and so does the film. The remnants of society struggle to survive in a post-nuclear war world, with The Templars, a roving band of Gay terrorists, trying to rid the world of the remaining humans, including themselves. The director must have bought up all the trampolines in Rome for his stunt men to play with. ● **DS**

LETTERS



SETTING THE VIDEO-RECORD STRAIGHT

I enjoyed Tim Lucas' articles on *THE DEAD ZONE* [14:2:24] and *VIDEO DROME* [14:2:32], but I feel some corrections must be made. As often happens on a production containing various effects departments, the specific roles played can sometimes get lost in the shuffle.

In the fall of 1981, Michael Lennick was hired by *VIDEO DROME*'s producers to "waterproof a television set," and he brought me on as an assistant. As the script's requirements for video effects began finding their way to our department, we agreed to share the responsibility for creating these bizarre images—I was no longer an assistant, but co-designer and creator. Lennick and I then hired Robert Meckler and, later, Malcolm Glassford to assist.

It was agreed that we would collectively share the Video and Electronic Effects credit, but somehow this never happened. Lennick received sole credit, Meckler and I became "video assistants," and Glassford received no credit.

It was also mentioned in the article that I specialize in computer graphics. While I do have some computer animation background—and had prepared a method for computer rotoscoping Deborah Harry's form for her video "twitches"—this is not the case. My capacity on subsequent films has included mechanical, optical and pyrotechnic effects.

With regards to the article on *THE DEAD ZONE*, author Lucas mentions that Lennick and I supplied video monitoring for [special effects] coordinator Jon Belyeu. Actually, Lennick was hired to provide video recording and playback facilities for the moments in the film that contained TV broadcasts. I was brought in once to provide a video tap from Mark Irwin's camera, so that Belyeu and his crew could cue their fire effects based on camera position.

Please don't misunderstand—I'm just tired of being asked the same

questions by friends, fans and prospective employers. I feel privileged to have worked with David Cronenberg, and like everyone else involved, feel a part of a large family.

Lee Wilson
Toronto, Ontario

CONGRATS ON A NICE JOB, BUT WHAT TOOK YOU GUYS SO LONG?

Since I saw David Cronenberg's *VIDEO DROME*, hardly a day has gone by without me thinking of the awesome, mind-wrenching genius of Cronenberg's film. But when I checked with my local sources of posters and movie photos, *VIDEO DROME* drew blank stares. I couldn't find a single bookstore in the state that had a copy of the novelization. The soundtrack album served as my sole souvenir.

But then I found Tim Lucas' article in your last issue. My astonishment and delight at your extensive and detailed coverage were second only to my feelings towards the film itself. My only complaint: *What took you so long?* On the last page of your article you wag an accusatory finger at the major film critics for releasing their rave reviews "too late, often making it into print only after the film had already closed." Since your coverage appeared almost a full year after the film came and vanished, isn't that a little like the pot calling the kettle black?

Gregory Nicoll
Atlanta, Georgia

Actually, we printed a favorable review of *VIDEO DROME* back in February, 1983 [12:4:4], about nine months before last issue's production article (but, admittedly, weeks after the film had been pulled from mass distribution). With our lengthy production schedule and bi-monthly frequency, it's impossible to review most films while they're still in release, although we manage to do it occasionally. Similarly, our limited frequency dictated that we publish Tim Lucas' coverage of *VIDEO DROME* in tandem with his coverage of Cronenberg's *THE DEAD ZONE*. All earlier issues were already booked up. In this case, the delay was only a few months. Sometimes, however, there are delays of years, as our next letter testifies.

... AND WHY ARE YOU TAKING SO LONG WITH THESE?

You folks never bother to tell your readers the fate of many articles we've been promised in the past. For example:

- Whatever happened to Part Three of Mark Wolf's articles on stop motion?
- Whatever happened to Part Two of Dennis Johnson's article on George Pal?
- Whatever happened to the article on the making of *THE TIME MACHINE* you promised us five or six years ago?
- And whatever happened to your "real story" about *STAR TREK*—

THE MOTION PICTURE?

The fact that you've never printed these stories is irrelevant. What matters is that you haven't had enough regard to tell us the reasons for their non-appearance, or even apologize for their non-appearance!

Ian Kerr
Victoria, Australia

It's true that we've announced—but never published—each of the stories you've mentioned above. Admittedly, this happens from time to time (this issue, for example, was originally to feature a cover story on John Carpenter's *CHRISTINE*). The reasons are different for every case, but the cause for an article's delay or termination usually falls into one of three basic categories:

Sometimes writers lose interest in a project, or find the material simply isn't as promising as it originally appeared to be:

Occasionally, articles fall through at the last minute. A key source may refuse to be interviewed, the studio may refuse to release suitable photos, or a writer may simply come up empty handed after weeks, even months of work:

Or, the articles may be written and ready to publish, awaiting only a suitable opening in our schedule. Our double-issue on *STAR TREK*—*TMP*, for example, falls into this category. So does the continuation of Ted Newsom's career profile of Ray Harryhausen, which other readers have recently inquired about.

It's a little awkward talking about these non-articles, and thus we must apologize for our lack of prior apologies. But like the fisherman, we'd much rather show off the catch of the day than explain about the ones that got away.

SHEDDING MORE LIGHT ON "INTERFACE"

I would like to make a few corrections of fact in Michael Mayo's recent piece about our project, *INTERFACE* [14:2:13].

We are still the producers of *INTERFACE*, even though Paramount owns the screenplay. We are not waiting for Paramount to proceed or develop it; they are waiting for us to proceed. We got delayed in our plans because of our involvement in the making of *THE COTTON CLUB*, which will keep us busy for the next year.

We are not squabbling with Paramount over *THE COTTON CLUB* because Paramount is not the distributor or owner of it. Orion is the distributor in the U.S., and the film is financed and owned by private, non-movie business people. Robert Evans is the producer.

THE COTTON CLUB is not overschedule. It completed principal photography on December 23, which is



"So why bother with stop-motion animation?
A man in a suit is just as good..."

83 shooting days. This is quite a short schedule for a musical of this size.

INTERFACE has never been rewritten by any writer other than Charles Proser, who has only done two or three drafts, none lately. And maybe Scott Bartlett hasn't heard directly from Francis, but he has heard from me telling him that when we eventually make the film, Francis would like him to be involved in it.

Fred Roos
Zoetrope Studios

Michael Mayo replies: While associating THE COTTON CLUB and Paramount Pictures was an unfortunate editing error, other points in Mr. Roos' reply beg the questions involved. For example, on the question of delays because of THE COTTON CLUB, why then did Zoetrope not continue active preproduction of INTERFACE directly after ONE FROM THE HEART?

Reports in both "Variety" and "The Los Angeles Times" have extensively chronicled the legal and financial difficulties plaguing THE COTTON CLUB. And while there may not have been an official, full-fledged rewrite on INTERFACE, other writers have almost certainly worked on the project since Proser's last rewrite was submitted, including one draft submitted to Roos personally.

DUELING LATEX TECHNICIANS—ROUND THREE

I am most annoyed at being put in the position of having to pen this reply to Sal Denaro's letter [13:6 14:1:111], which objected to certain statements concerning me in your coverage of THE DARK CRYSTAL [13:4:32].

First off—and I say this without a copy of the article at hand—if it was stated that I "perfected the foam process" used on THE DARK CRYSTAL, then Denaro was correct in pointing out that this was not so. Foam latex was pioneered by the Dunlop Rubber Company, and George Bau had the foresight to adapt this technology to film makeup.

What I did do on THE DARK CRYSTAL was adapt commercially-available foam components to suit the needs of the film. Eventually, the requirements exceeded the capabilities of the materials and, having studied rubber technology, I set out to design an "in-house" formula.

What bothers me is that Denaro seems to be confusing what he says he did—"perfecting and finding new uses for foam latex within the Henson Organization"—with not a lot more than learning how to work with a commercially-available product.

Unfortunately, there was much

ground left uncovered in my hour-long interview with writer Alan Jones. But as I understood it, the article was to be centered around the production of THE DARK CRYSTAL, and not a history of foam latex within the Henson organization. Honestly Sal, if you had been in the London workshops turning out foam pieces for the film, I would have certainly made a point of mentioning your name.

Tom McLaughlin
EMI Studios, England

THE STRAIGHT DOPE ON "LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS"

In reference to Dennis Fischer's recent article on the legal wrangling surrounding LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS [14:2:12], I wish to correct a few statements. First, I assume that "theatrical producer Howard Asherman" refers to me, although my name is Ashman and I am emphatically not a producer, but only the show's lyricist, librettist and director.

Next, I certainly never "discovered" that a copyright renewal notice had not been properly filed on the film, and that it was therefore in the public domain. Quite to the contrary, the musical rights were very formally acquired from New World Cinema,

at my request, by Kyle Renick, producing director of the WPA Theatre, where the musical was first mounted.

Second, although I am writing the screenplay to which Mr. Fischer refers, the money paid for the film rights to LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS is not paid to me alone, but shared among the show's composer, producers, and all of its other royalty participants, including Martin P. Robinson, who designed the puppets.

I can't speak for the accuracy of the rest of the article, except to confirm happily that a settlement with Charles Griffith has indeed been reached, and that future credits on the show will very properly include his name.

Howard Ashman
New York, New York

Dennis Fischer replies: A source that I considered reliable proved to be misinformed concerning your acquisition of the musical rights. A second source could only confirm that the film was in the public domain. Other sources were not at liberty to discuss the case prior to the settlement with Charles Griffith. Finally, I was unable to contact you directly. Checking with Griffith, he tells me that you dealt with New World "in good faith," and that your love of the original was genuine. I thank you for your clarification.

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STAR TREK

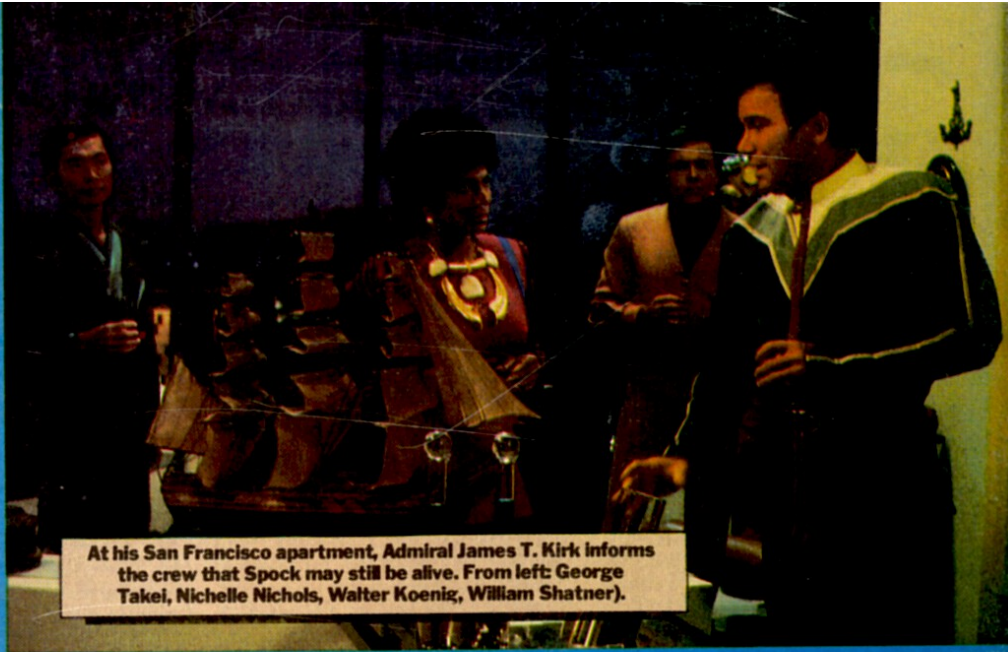
The Search for Spock III

director
Leonard Nimoy
speaks out!

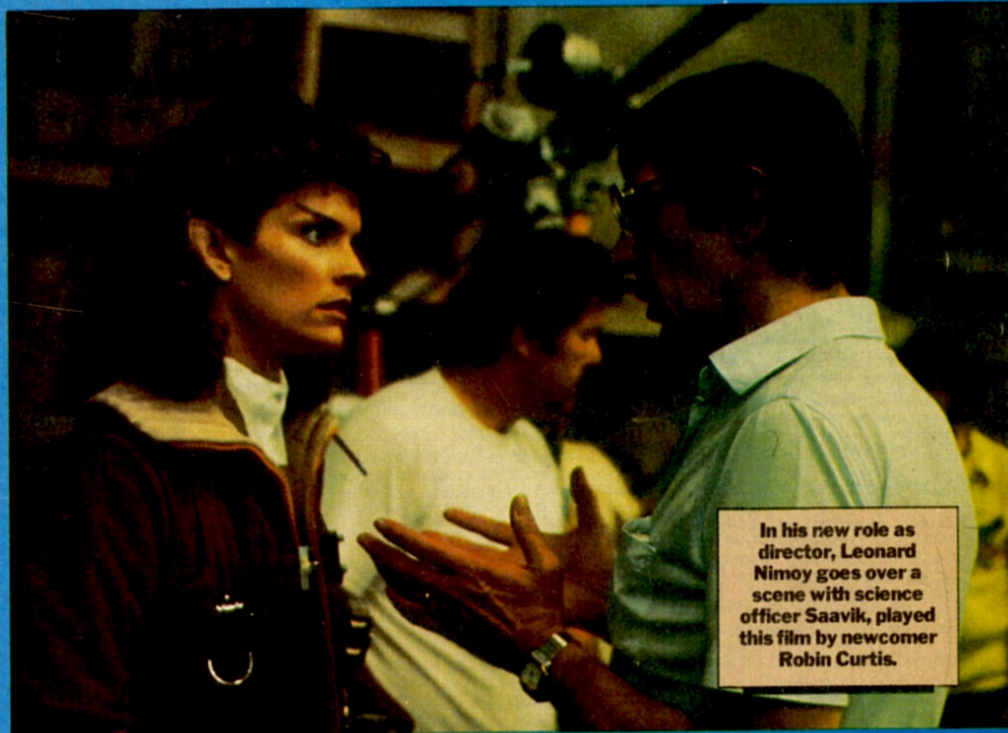


“It’s a very powerful story about friendship and commitment to friendship, and what friends will do for each other.”

“This film goes to the very heart of the relationship of these people. All of them—Kirk, Scotty, Sulu, McCoy, Chekov, Uhura—will be asked to make major sacrifices in the hope that they can help the man who was once their friend.”



At his San Francisco apartment, Admiral James T. Kirk informs the crew that Spock may still be alive. From left: George Takei, Nichelle Nichols, Walter Koenig, William Shatner).



In his new role as director, Leonard Nimoy goes over a scene with science officer Saavik, played this film by newcomer Robin Curtis.



Dr. McCoy (DeForest Kelley) turns on the Southern charm for a cocktail waitress in a futuristic San Francisco nightclub.

Exclusive Preview!

See Page 6